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Delay sought for wage hike bills

JON PEREZ

Annie Guerrero-Hayes addresses the members of the House of Representatives during the public comments portion in last week's session.

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Two businesspersons have asked the House of Representatives to delay the passage of a bill that would raise the Commonwealth minimum wage to the federal level of $7.25 an hour.

House Speaker Rafael S. Demapan (R-Saipan) introduced House Bill 19-23, while Rep. Angel A. Demapan (R-Saipan) authored a separate bill, HB 19-187, which also aims to increase the minimum wage to the national level of $7.25.

Annie Guerrero-Hayes and Joaquin Villagomez took the podium and pleaded with House members during the public comments portion of a session last week to put off acting on the measures, saying it would adversely affect them.

Guerrero-Hayes, who is the assistant manager of Herman's

See DELAY on Page 4

CHRISTMAS IN THE MARIANAS

A giant Christmas tree invites tourists to pose for a commemorative picture during the opening night of Christmas in the Marianas 2016 at Paseo de Marianas in Garapan.

See more photos on Page 13

ERWIN ENCINARES

Torres to meet US Defense officials

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres leaves for Saipan today for an official trip that includes attending the 75th commemoration of the attack on Pearl Harbor on Wednesday. He is also scheduled to meet with ranking members of the U.S. military and Department of Defense officials while on the island of Oahu.

The meeting is part of the ongoing discussion on 902 issues, particularly the proposed military buildup in the CNMI that includes a live-fire training facility, as stated on the Commonwealth Joint Military Training.

Press secretary Ivan Blanco said that despite the break in the 902 schedules, discussions would continue with Torres again raising issues and matters related to the talks.

The DoD's plan of having

See TORRES on Page 4

Man allegedly pokes wife with screwdriver, hits her with fan, bucket

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

An intoxicated man allegedly poked a screwdriver on the neck of his common-law wife, choked her, punched her, and hit her with an electric fan and a bucket at their residence in Susupe last week.

The couple's 1-year-old child sustained a bump on the forehead after being hit by the electric fan.

The wife had several bruises on the right forearm, a bruise on the left forearm, a scratch and bruise on her left bicep, a slight cut on the left side of her neck, and a bruise above her right knee, police said.

Christopher Reyes Dela Cruz, 34, was arrested for assault with a dangerous weapon, assault and battery, and disturbing the peace. His bail was set Friday at $10,000 cash; preliminary hearing will be on Dec. 7 at 9am.

Assistant public defender Nancy Dominski was appointed as counsel for Dela Cruz. Assistant attorney general Robert Glass Jr. appeared for

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The possible selection of Mitt Romney as secretary of state is met with trepidation.
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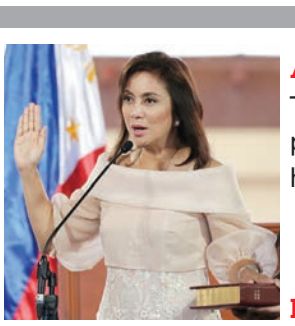

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The Philippine vice president has resigned her Cabinet post.
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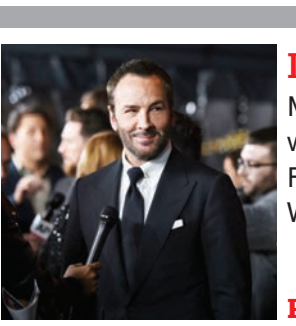

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Melania Trump likely won't be wearing Tom Ford's clothes in the White House.
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JON PEREZ

Former House speaker Pedro R. Deleon Guerrero, seventh from left, and Dr. Glenda S. George-Concepcion, 10th from left, join members of the Legislature and their friends for a group photo after their Senate confirmation last Friday at the Senate chamber on Capitol Hill.

Senate confirms four of Torres' appointees

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Senate last week confirmed the appointments of Dr. Glenda S. George-Concepcion, Benjamin Petersburg, and Jovano Q. Taitano and the re-appointment of former House speaker Pedro R. Deleon Guerrero to various government posts.

George-Concepcion will be a member of the Health Care Professional Licensing board while Petersburg would serve under the Commonwealth Development Authority's board of directors and Taitano would be a part of the Professional Licensing board.

Deleon Guerrero, the speaker of the 7th Legislature, was re-appointed as a member of the Marianas Public Land Trust.

Sen. Francisco Q. Cruz (R-Tinian), chairman of the Senate Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations, endorsed the committee reports based on the public hearings the six-member body held for each appointees.

George-Concepcion holds a doctorate in Clinical Psychology and trained and practiced mostly in Seattle, Washington. Her post-doctorate practice was at Madigan Army Medical Center where she worked with active U.S. Armed Forces personnel.

Madigan is inside the Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Tacoma, Washington and is one of the largest military hospitals in the West Coast.

George-Concepcion also worked as a contractor at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in Seattle before returning to Saipan two years ago. She now works at the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. where she oversees and supervises the clinical programs of the Commonwealth Guidance Center.

George-Concepcion said although she's a novice when it comes the licensing board, she's confident her years as a clinician and a program director for CGC are enough for her to perform her duties.

"I'm ready to work and collaborate with the other members of the board and look out for the common good of the people, guided by the laws and standards of practice and highest integrity of the Health Care Professions Licensing Board," said George-Concepcion.

"I am looking forward to helping the board in areas where we are faced with challenges and assist them in building the board's capacity and duties without compromising the quality of healthcare," she added.

Deleon Guerrero, meanwhile, thanked the administration for their confidence and trust for re-appointing him to the MPLT board.

"We will pursue the mandate of MPLT where all public lands belong to people of the CNMI who are of Northern Marianas descent as stated on the Constitution. There's a lot of work that still needs to be done."

He added that he would discuss with the other MPLT board members the concerns of the NMDs. "We will particularly work with the Legislature on how to address the concerns of the people. It has to be between the trustees, our advisors, and working closely with the Legislature to make things possible."

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Zoning OKs $75M hotel project of ex-Dynasty chair

The Commonwealth Zoning Board voted last Dec. 1 to approve—with several conditions—the application of an international group of investors to build a $75-million, nine-story, 438-room hotel complete with pools, restaurants, shops, and staff housing units in San Roque.

Within 60 days, the applicant is required to provide a revised parking layout plan by a qualified engineer.

Globe International Group, which is based in Hong Kong, plans to build a hotel south of the Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School. The hotel will have access to the lagoon on the west.

Set for completion in two years, the hotel was planned due to the recent spike in tourism numbers in the CNMI, explained Tom Liu, the contact person for Globe International Group and former Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino general manager.

Michael Kwan, former chairman of the Hong Kong Entertainment board that owned the Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino, is the property owner but was not present at the hearing.

Among other conditions, Zoning wants the applicant to ensure that the construction does not generate an unreasonable level of noise, odor, light, or dust that would affect nearby neighborhoods and the public. Construction activities are limited from 7:30am to 5:30pm, Monday through Saturday.

Zoning board vice chair Bruce Bateman shared at the meeting the demand for hotel rooms, now that the current hotels are constantly full.

"Hotel developments are vital in further improving the economy," said Bateman.

During the public comment period, Saipan Chamber of Commerce board member Alex Sablan said he supports the project in order to fill in gaps of the hotel room shortage.

"I think this is one of nine or so projects in the pipeline. We do have a problem with rooms and we have been calling for an expansion in the number of rooms in the CNMI and so I definitely support this project and hope that it does go forward for this group," he said.

"They [Globe International Group] operate an airline as well. It's not the same company, but their background has the ability to fill these rooms. We're not talking about an organization that just wants to build rooms for the sake of building rooms," added Sablan.

After further discussion and deliberation, the Zoning board unanimously voted to approve the application. ***(Erwin Encinares)***

4 suspected 'ice' dealers fall

Four alleged members of two groups of suspected suppliers of methamphetamine or "ice" on Saipan were arrested by members of the CNMI Drug Enforcement Task Force over the weekend.

Vincent Hocog Pangelinan, also known as Ben, 32; Jonathon Samuel Pangelinan, also known as John, 28; Joaquin Adriano Jr., 33; and Justin Reyes Muna, 31, were all arrested in Kagman 3 on Friday night.

Brothers Vincent and Jonathon Pangelinan, Adriano, and Muna were arrested on charges of trafficking of a controlled substance, possession of a controlled substance, and conspiracy to traffic a controlled substance.

The four were brought yesterday before Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho, who imposed a $100,000 cash bail for each of the four suspects. Preliminary hearings will be on Dec. 13 at 1:30pm.

Assistant attorney general Chester Hinds appeared for the government.

Camacho appointed assistant public defender Nancy Dominski as counsel for Adriano and Muna. Private counsel will be appointed for Vincent and Jonathon Pangelinan.

According to court documents, task force officers first arrested Vincent Pangelinan and Adriano last June 23. Jonathon Pangelinan was arrested last July 1, and Muna last Aug. 26.

In the government's motion to unseal filed on Friday, Hinds said the four defendants waived their constitutional rights and requested to assist law enforcers as confidential informants.

In exchange, Hinds said, the Department of Public Safety would agree to release them without cash bail subject to certain conditions. Hinds said the court then granted the government's motion to seal the cases. However, Hinds said, the four have not cooperated with law enforcement. Thus, Hinds said, there is no need to continue keeping under seal all documents filed in these cases, nor should the defendants be allowed to remain free in light of their non-compliance.

The court granted the government's motion on Friday. Task force officers re-arrested the defendants that same day.

Task force officer Roque K. Camacho stated in his report that a cooperating defendant managed to buy $100 worth of "ice" from Vincent Pangelinan during a "buy walk" operation at the latter's residence in Kagman last March 17.

Camacho said a cooperating source was able to buy $130 worth of "ice" from Jonathon Pangelinan and Adriano at the same Kagman residence last March 31.

Task force operatives arrested the Pangelinan brothers and Adriano last July 23 based on the two drug transactions.

In Muna's case, Camacho said Muna allegedly conspired with two other drug suppliers to sell $120 worth of "ice" to a cooperating source during a "buy walk operation" last Aug. 18 at a residence in Lower Miha, Garapan. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Christmas in the Marianas kicks off

A Christmas tree decoration contest, caroling competition, and a parade and costume show kicked off the Marianas Visitors Authority's annual Christmas in the Marianas festival last Saturday at the Paseo de Marianas.

MVA and PDM Promoters host this year's festival.

A total of 17 schools participated in the Christmas tree decoration contest and a total of 19 schools participated in the caroling competition, all from various elementary schools, middle schools, and high school participants. A total of nine schools participated in the parade and costume show.

"This is our 17th year of hosting this event right in the heart of historic Garapan. The huge turnout on Saturday is a great sign that the holiday spirit is alive and well in the Commonwealth," said MVA managing director Chris Concepcion.

He invites the public for activities at the Paseo de Marianas the next four Saturdays—Dec. 10, 17, 23, and 30. ***(Erwin Encinares)***

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TDHC owners no longer have employees in the CNMI

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The owners of the now-defunct Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino no longer have any employees in the CNMI and four of among the 500 foreign workers who are suing Tinian Dynasty over the denial of their CNMI-only Transitional Worker (CW-1) petitions are off-island due to ongoing visa issues.

Samuel Mok, counsel for the foreign workers, and Daniel T. Guidotti, counsel for Tinian Dynasty owners Hong Kong Entertainment (Overseas) Investments Ltd. and Mega Stars Overseas Limited, filed yesterday in federal court a stipulation to move discovery cutoff and status conference in this case.

Mok and Guidotti asked the U.S. District Court for the NMI to continue the discovery cutoff in this case to Jan. 16, 2017, and the post-cut off status conference to Jan. 18, 2017.

» 4 workers who sued are off-island due to visa issues
» Witnesses could not be located; water, power shut off at hotel

Mok and Guidotti disclosed that HKE and Mega Stars have ongoing discovery issues as they no longer have any employees working in the CNMI and that water and power to Tinian Dynasty has been shut off.

The lawyers said HKE and Mega Stars believe that they have custody of many of the documents being requested by the workers and that the documents are located in the now-defunct Tinian Dynasty hotel.

Guidotti has scheduled an off-island deposition for Dec. 8, 2016.

Mok and Guidotti said plaintiffs were served with 15 sets of discovery requests a few weeks ago in which documents and responses are still being coordinated.

Mok and Guidotti said four of the plaintiffs are currently off-island due to ongoing visa issues that have hampered their ability to efficiently participate in the production of their discovery responses.

Plaintiffs were recently informed that many of the witnesses sought to be deposed no longer work for HKE and Mega Stars and require private investigation to locate them.

Mok said he will also be undergoing off-island medical surgery for his left eye on Dec. 19, 2016, which will require a recovery period of at least one week.

In their lawsuit, Eric Dona and co-plaintiffs alleged that the owners and management of Tinian Dynasty lied to them about their immigration legal status.

Mok alleged that the owners and management of Tinian Dynasty lied that they were legally authorized to work notwithstanding the denial of their CW-1 petitions.

Hyatt lights Christmas tree to celebrate 36 years

By MICHAEL T SANTOS
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REPORTER

Hyatt Regency Saipan lit a giant Christmas tree last Thursday as part of an annual tradition but the occasion also served as a commemoration of the hotel's 36 years of operation on island.

Garapan Elementary School children served as the guests of honor during the event.

Nick Nishikawa, general manager for Hyatt Regency Saipan, said, "Every Christmas we set up a Christmas tree for the public to celebrate together."

"We just want to thank everyone in the community for supporting us in the past 36 years on this island," Nishikawa said. "Our lease is actually until 2021, so five more years left. So we hope the government can give us an extension so we can celebrate even more tree lighting ceremonies. These kids present, hopefully, can still see the Hyatt when they grow older. The CNMI is home to Hyatt and among any other international hotels, we are the only ones that have stayed here."

Along with remarks made by officials of Hyatt, a student from Garapan Elementary School, Justin Tubera, was asked to step to the front and sing several Christmas songs.

Peachy Quitugua, 2016 Miss Marianas, said, "I think tonight is a great event not only for Hyatt, but for the community as well. It's nice to see everyone gathered in one area and just have a good time, especially during the holidays."

Also on site for caroling was the Hopwood Junior High School Choir. Festive holiday singing began at 5:30pm.

Jasper Ramos, a child attending the event, said, "I really want to see the tree get lit. It's so big and I can tell it will look so cool."

CHCC staff against politically appointed board

By ERWIN ENCINARES
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REPORTER

Many of the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.'s personnel are against a bill that proposes to reinstate a board of trustees with authority over the s chief executive officer, which was supposed to be discussed during the Senate Health and Welfare committee yesterday.

The lack of quorum stopped the Senate committee from holding a public hearing on the bill, House Bill 19-186 HD1, which proposes to reinstate the CHCC board with politically appointed members with power to govern, manage, and control CHCC operations.

Many of the CHCC staff that openly opposes the bill were ready and eager to express their dissent at yesterday's committee hearing, especially CHCC special assistant for Policy, Sustainability, and Development Kaitlyn Neises, but were unable to do so.

"The committee did not have a quorum, with only three members in attendance, and so couldn't continue with having a meeting and did not hear our testimonies. This was very disappointing," said Neises in an email.

Neises was even more disappointed to learn through Senate Health and Welfare Committee chair Sen. Teresita Santos (R-Rota) that the Senate would still press ahead with voting on the bill, whether or not a public hearing is held for it.

"Sen. Santos notified us that, even though there has never been a Senate committee meeting or public hearing on this bill, it is scheduled to be voted on at tomorrow's Senate session at 1:30pm (Tuesday, Dec. 6). It seems the Senate wishes to vote on it without a committee meeting or report," said Neises in the same email.

"This bill would seriously harm the CHCC and likely undo the progress made in the last few years if it is passed. Despite listing the deficiencies with the bill in numerous comment letters, the Legislature seems determined to the push the bill through," she added.

CHCC has not had a board meeting for over a year. As of publication, the CHCC board acts as an advisory body as compared to the governing body proposed by the bill.

The Senate session in which the voting would be held in is today, at 1:30pm in the Senate chamber on Capital Hill.

DELAY

From Page 1

Bakery, reiterated an earlier stance against the planned minimum wage increase to the federal level. She said increasing the minimum wage again would have a great impact on the community. The last time the minimum wage saw an increase was in September, when it went up by .50 cents, from $6.05 an hour to $6.55 an hour.

"I was here two weeks ago and spoke against increasing the minimum wage. And we are still standing against it. We are asking the House to please delay this and have a public hearing. Have the community speak on the issue," said Guerrero-Hayes.

"At least let the community have a say on what needs to be done or how to approach the issue simply because, when this was put out, comments were only asked from the Saipan Chamber of Commerce and the Civil Service Commission. The other members of the private sector were not asked," she said.

She said that giving the other sectors of the community a chance to speak would give the House the opportunity to make a sound judgment and not just pass the law.

"So you could make a sound judgment and not go back just to repeal the law. Give small businesses the chance to speak their piece," Guerrero-Hayes said.

SCC president Velma Palacios, in an earlier interview with the *Saipan Tribune*, said not all CNMI businesses and employers could afford paying their workers the increase in minimum wage.

Mom-and-pop stores, or small groceries, and other small businesses are one of their concerns. Their operations would be affected if the hourly rate of employees is immediately increased.

Guerrero-Hayes said there are consequences when it comes to increasing the minimum wage. "There is also the increase in the prices of goods. Herman's will have no other recourse but to also raise our prices. …Just to think of increasing the prices of bread to $3 or higher, we also think of the people who don't have enough money to buy goods or are under food stamps. We always put that as a factor."

Villagomez supported Guerrero-Hayes' concerns, adding that he recently had an air-conditioning unit cleaned and he paid $63, which used to be $30. "[Businesses] had already increased their prices."

He added that the bill would take effect in 90 days after Gov. Ralph DLG Torres signs it into law. "They said that if the minimum wage goes up to $7.25, they would again increase it to $100. The impact on small businesses and the public is severe if the bill is passed. Please allow the public to speak."

TORRES

From Page 1

live-fire training under CJMT is one of the issues to be discussed in the 902 talks. Both the CNMI and federal panels are discussing if the proposal is consistent with the Covenant between the Commonwealth and the U.S. government

The administration, in a statement, said local non-profit organizations continue to raise their concerns and question the DoD's proposed activities and its short- and long-term effects on the CNMI.

Torres would meet with U.S. Pacific Command Deputy Commander Lt. Gen. Anthony Crutchfield. USPACOM is based in the U.S. Marine Corps installation of Camp H.M. Smith in Alea, Oahu.

The meeting is also part of maintaining bilateral communication between Torres and DoD officials.

The governor was invited to take part in the 75th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese Navy. He would also meet with other state and federal officials during his two-day trip to Hawaii.

Torres is expected back on Saipan on Dec. 9 to attend to some family matters before leaving again to attend the National Governors Association meeting from Dec. 12 to 14 in San Diego, California. Lt. Gov. Victor B. Hocog will be acting governor when Torres is off-island.

While the administration awaits the final 902 talks report from the White House, Torres would continue to reach out to other NGA members, most especially governors from the Western states, Blanco said.

Torres is seeking support on issues that would have adverse effect on the CNMI, including the presidential transition, the impact of the possible repeal of the Affordable Care Act, renewable energy, and the local labor shortage.

MAN

From Page 1

the government.

When a police officer responded to the scene last Tuesday night, a neighbor told the officer that he called police because he was tired of Dela Cruz always causing problems at the residence.

Police detective Koji M. N. Taisakan stated in his report that Dela Cruz demanded that his wife be arrested instead for drinking and for allegedly calling a drug dealer for more drugs.

The officer noticed that the victim was crying and was carrying a 1-year-old boy with a red bump on his forehead.

Taisakan stated that, according to the victim, she had been staying at her mother's house in Kagman since Nov. 24, Thanksgiving, because Dela Cruz would constantly accuse her of cheating on him.

The victim said she returned to their house earlier that day, Tuesday. Later that night, Dela Cruz again accused her of cheating on him, then started yelling at her and slapped her while she was holding their baby.

Dela Cruz threw a can of beer toward her and their two children. He took an electric fan and tried to hit her with it.

The fan also struck the baby. When she told him she was leaving him, he took a screwdriver and poked it at her.

Dela Cruz then grabbed his wife and threw her onto the bed.

He got on top of her and started choking her neck. She nearly blacked out and remembers seeing her two children crying, staring, and begging for their father to stop. Dela Cruz stopped choking her but punched her several times.

When she managed to break away, she took their children outside of the room. Dela Cruz, however, tripped her, picked up a bucket, and broke it on his wife's back. The victim said it was not the first time that Dela Cruz beat her up.

MCS' *Lion King* exceeds expectations

By MICHAEL T SANTOS
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REPORTER

As the curtains came down last Saturday at Saipan World Resort's Royal Taga Hall, audience members and crew of Mount Carmel's *Lion King Jr.* gave a shout of triumph for the success of the Christmas play.

The president of Mount Carmel School himself, Galvin Deleon Guerrero, said, "I am just overwhelmed and humbled by the turnout. This is the biggest audience we've ever had in our Theatre Club history and I'm just really happy our community appreciates theatre."

Auditions and rehearsals for the play started in early September. Rehearsals were thrice a week and lasted two hours each.

"These kids put in a lot of work and to have to sell out shows is the biggest compliment and reward they can get," Guerrero said. "Sell out or no sell out, what matters most to me is that the kids feel good about the work they have done and I can tell tonight they feel fantastic about it. Even if there were only 10 people out, I still would've been proud."

MCS has been doing their annual Christmas plays the past 20 years, with the purpose of challenging the club to stage high production value shows on an annual basis.

"Having to act in this play was spectacular!" said Aalea Borj-Rafiki. "I started off as a crewmember and this is my first time acting on stage. The turnout was fantastic, we were a little worried a couple of days ago for the play but things just went so well."

An audience member, Kevin Bautista, said, "I thought the play was awesome. The MCS Theatre Club always seems to innovate their performances. Galvin has a long history for putting together great shows and these students just get better every single year."

As an alumnus of the Theatre Club, Bautista has been in five shows during his time in the program.

"The younger generation never ceases to amaze me. They constantly make the program better and I just love the fact that the program exposes younger actors to the many themes that resonate within the Theatre Club," Bautista said.

The cast of the MCS Theatre Club do a musical number during their performance of *Lion King Jr.* at the Saipan World Resort's Royal Taga Hall on Dec. 3.

MICHAEL T SANTOS

The cast of the MCS Theatre Club reenacts the death of Mufasa during their performance of *Lion King Jr.* at the Saipan World Resort's Royal Taga Hall on Dec. 3.

MICHAEL T SANTOS

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MVA a hit at the China International Travel Mart

The Marianas Visitors Authority brought a taste of the Northern Mariana Islands to the China International Travel Mart in Shanghai on Nov. 11-13, 2016.

With over 100,000 people in attendance at the event, the MVA's booth received a large share of people looking to sign up for package tours and take individually arranged vacations. The MVA management team engaged in promotional efforts with key industry leaders at the NMI exhibition, which received enthusiastic audience feedback and featured Chinese media, government, and other travel industry heavy hitters.

Marianas Visitors Authority board chair Marian Aldan Pierce, fifth from left, and MVA managing director Christopher A. Concepcion, fourth from right, met China National Tourism Administration chair Li Jinzao, second from left, and Shanghai vice mayor Zhao Wen, third from left, at China International Travel Mart on Nov. 11-13, 2016 in Shanghai. Since its debut inception in 2001, the CITM has become the largest travel mart in Asia, supported by global travel industry factions. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

To increase awareness of the NMI amongst Chinese government leaders, the MVA delegation led by board chair Marian Aldan-Pierce and managing director Chris Concepcion met with the director of the China National Tourism Administration and the vice mayor of Shanghai on the opening day of the event. Both government leaders were featured by major China media channels touring the MVA's booth, which showcased Saipan, Tinian, and Rota as a package tourist destination. During the exhibition, the MVA received positive media coverage and was featured in interviews on some of China's most influential media channels, including CCTV and China's version of YouTube, Youku. The event was also covered by the Shanghai TV station and many members of Shanghai's mainstream media channels, featuring the NMI as the ideal tropical destination especially for the New Year.

"During the past year, mainland China has become the NMI's largest tourism industry contributor," said Concepcion. "The MVA values the onward development of this gigantic and very promising market. Our goal for the 2016 CITM was to enhance the awareness of the NMI in China and to strengthen cooperation with numerous industry peers. We are striving to make Saipan, Tinian, and Rota the first choice for island travel for Chinese tourists."

Last fiscal year, the NMI welcomed over 200,000 Chinese tourists, comprising 41 percent of total visitor arrivals.

"To breach the 200,000 benchmark this year is a very good accomplishment," Concepcion added.

To secure a share of the over 2 million Chinese tourists traveling overseas to island destinations, two major outbound travel agencies—Dynasty Holidays and Century Tours—were invited to conduct promotional activities and to introduce Chinese tourists to the beauty and charm of the NMI.

The MVA's exhibition featured cultural dances by indigenous Carolinian dancers who were clad in traditional outfits, traditional lessons in weaving, and a countdown to 2017 New Year travel packages. The booth featured tropical themes and highlighted prominent features of the islands. Blue was selected as the main theme color, with round light boxes evoking diving elements. Shell shapes were reminiscent of beautiful beaches while a jellyfish inspired counter was set against a backdrop modeling harbor views. The Northern Marianas exhibition also commemorated the special event with souvenirs and gifts featuring links to the MVA's official website, Wechat, and Weibo platforms in China to provide further information about the NMI.

Since its debut inception in 2001, the CITM has become the largest travel mart in Asia, supported by global travel industry factions. ***(MVA)***

Indigenous Carolinian dancers were part of the delegation of the Northern Mariana Islands promoting Saipan, Tinian, and Rota at China International Travel Mart on Nov. 11-13, 2016, in Shanghai. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

WANTED

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Commonwealth Zoning Special Board Meeting Agenda

Friday, December 09, 2016
9:30 AM, Zoning Board Conference Room
Tel: 234-9661 • Fax: 234-9666 • www.zoning.gov.mp

A. Preliminary Matters
1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Public Comments

B. Executive (Closed) Session: Personnel & Operation Matters

C. Miscellaneous
a. Other Matters
b. Announcements
c. Next Meeting

D. Adjourn

For questions or access to materials to be considered at the Board meeting, or if you require assistance, please contact the Zoning Administrator, Therese T. Ogumoro, at 234-9661. This notice is provided pursuant to Public Law 6-32, as amended (2 CMC 7201, et seq. & 10 CMC 3511, et seq.).

/s/ Diego C. Blanco, Zoning Board Chairman

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

Henry P. Manipon Petitioner,	)	FCD-DI CIVIL ACTION NO. 16-0530
vs.	)	
Lenibeth Crisostomo Manipon Respondent,	)	**SUMMONS FOR PUBLICATION**

TO THE ABOVE NAME RESPONDENT:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is on file with the court, within thirty (30) days after service of the Summons upon you, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to the Petitioner whose address is PMB 309, P.O. Box 10001 as soon as practical after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at P.O. Box 500307 Susupe, Saipan, MP 96950. It may be prepared for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice. If you fail to file an answer in accordance with this summons, judgment by default may be taken against you for relief in the complaint.

Dated this 26th day of October, 2016

/s/ Clerk of Court

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Black, Low Mileage of 2,731, STK#T16-10197
WAS $31,499
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2015 Sienna LE, V6, 8-pax
Marron, Low Mileage of 13,931, STK#T15-09549
WAS $38,099
NOW $31,999*

2016 4Runner, 4x4, 3RD Row
SR5, Red, Low Mileage of 2,105, STK#T16-02640
WAS $40,999
NOW $34,799*

2016 Tundra 4WD Crew Cab, SR5
Red, Low Mileage of 3,478, STK#T16-11340
WAS $52,299
NOW $43,999*

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WAS $14,999
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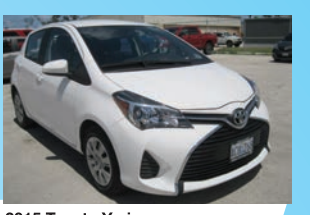

2015 Toyota Yaris
White, HB, Auto, STK#U16-118R
WAS $14,999
NOW $14,499*

2015 Yaris L Hatchback
Auto, Lt Blue, STK#U16-124R
WAS $14,999
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2015 Yaris L Hatchback
Auto, White, STK#U16-133R
WAS $14,999
NOW $14,499*

2015 Yaris L Hatchback
Auto, Silver, STK#U16-134R
WAS $14,999
NOW $14,699*

2015 Yaris L Hatchback
Auto, Silver, STK#U16-125R
WAS $15,099
NOW $14,699*

2015 Yaris L Hatchback
Auto, Blue, STK#U16-130R
WAS $15,199
NOW $14,699*

2015 Toyota Prius C-3
Gray, AT, STK#U16-099R
WAS $16,999
NOW $15,999*

2015 Toyota Prius C-3
Orange, AT, STK#U16-096R
WAS $17,099
NOW $16,499*

2015 Prius C HB, Auto
White, STK#U16-101R
WAS $17,099
NOW $16,499*

2014 Mitsubishi Outlander ES Sport
2WD, 4-Door, 4-Cyl., Blue, STK#U16-140P
WAS $17,999
NOW $16,999*

2015 Corolla LE, 4-Dr Sedan
Auto, Bronze STK#U16-138R
WAS $18,999
NOW $16,999*

2015 Toyota Corolla LE
4-Dr. Sedan, Auto, Red, STK#U16-116R
WAS $18,499
NOW $17,999*

2014 Prius V, Third Generation Hybrid
Auto, 4-Cyl, 4-Door, Red, STK#R16-015F
$21,499*

2013 Highlander Sport Utility, 2WD
4-Cyl, Auto, STK#U16-142P
$21,999*

2010 4Runner SR5
Black, 2WD, 4-Cyl, STK#U16-091T
WAS $24,399
NOW $22,999*

2013 4Runner SR5
Black, 4x4, 6-Cyl, STK#U16-092T
WAS $26,999
NOW $22,999*

2012 4Runner SR5
Gray, 2WD, 6-Cyl, STK#U16-094T
WAS $26,599
NOW $23,999*

2015 Sienna LE Van
Auto, White, STK#U16-131R
$33,999*

2016 4Runner, SR5, 4x4, 3rd Row
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Torres extends full support for CW cap increase

Introduced to the U.S. House of Representatives last week, Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres expressed his full support for Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan's bill to increase the number of Commonwealth-only permits for fiscal year 2017 to 15,000.

"We continue to explore all avenues to mitigate this issue and fully support critical legislation such as H.R. 6401 to provide short-term relief from the labor shortage facing the Commonwealth which will threaten our growing economy and public health," Torres said.

Referencing the latest report from the Bureau of Economic Analysis released last week, the Commonwealth economy continues to grow for the fourth consecutive year.

"A growing economy needs a qualified workforce, and while there are now more U.S. workers than foreign workers in the Northern Marianas for the first time in decades, there are still not enough workers to meet the labor demand. This legislation provided by Sablan (Ind-MP) for a temporary increase in the number Commonwealth-only transitional workers will help small businesses and new developments retain the workers needed to maintain operations and sustain our economy," Torres added.

Reiterating the complications of the current labor shortage, Torres noted that the Commonwealth's only hospital would lose critical staff that includes 34 staff nurses, two infection control nurses, a clinical laboratory scientist and specialists in mammography and ultrasonography.

"H.R. 6401 seeks to increase the CW worker fee which will provide additional funding for building a qualified U.S. workforce, which still remains a priority in this administration. Our efforts to recruit, educate, and train U.S. workers to establish a permanent pool to fill jobs continues as we move toward a very time-sensitive deadline. I commend [Sablan] for introducing this legislation and anticipate the decision of Congress during their session this week," Torres said. ***(Office of the Governor)***

Chamber to host GAO officers at its meeting

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce will be hosting a student for Career Exploration Day on Wednesday, Dec. 7. The students and Chamber members will later meet at the Royal Taga Hall of the Saipan World Resort for the monthly general membership meeting. The luncheon begins at 11:30am and the meeting portion begins promptly at noon.

The main speaker will be Emil E. Friberg Jr., assistant director of International Affairs and Trade at the Government Accountability Office. Members of the GAO staff are currently on island conducting research regarding the minimum wage issue, the Commonwealth's CW situation, and employee training.

Additional guest speakers are young professionals to inspire and encourage our attending students. First is G Van Gils, a teacher at Kagman High School and the new Teacher of the Year. Also speaking is the co-chair of the Chamber's Young Professionals Committee, Zachariah Johnson, a teacher at Hopwood Jr. High School. ***(Chamber)***

Join the annual Christmas Bird Count

This holiday season, birdwatchers and nature lovers have an excellent opportunity to learn more about our birds, and help scientists trying to conserve them. On Monday, Dec. 19, experienced and novice birders alike are invited to participate in Saipan's Annual Christmas Bird Count.

Started in 1900 by the National Audubon Society, the Christmas Bird Count is the world's longest-running citizen science project. Last year, over 70,000 volunteers counted over 66 million birds of 2,403 species across North America, the Pacific Islands, and Caribbean. The CNMI Division of Fish and Wildlife has organized local counts for over 25 years, typically tallying thousands of birds and 50-plus species.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Started in 1900 by the National Audubon Society, the Christmas Bird Count is the world's longest-running citizen science project.

Volunteers for the Saipan Count will meet at 6am at the American Memorial Park to divide into teams for roadside and walking surveys. Teams will spread out to cover the island, finding and recording as many birds and bird species as possible. Bring binoculars if you have them, but it's okay if you don't.

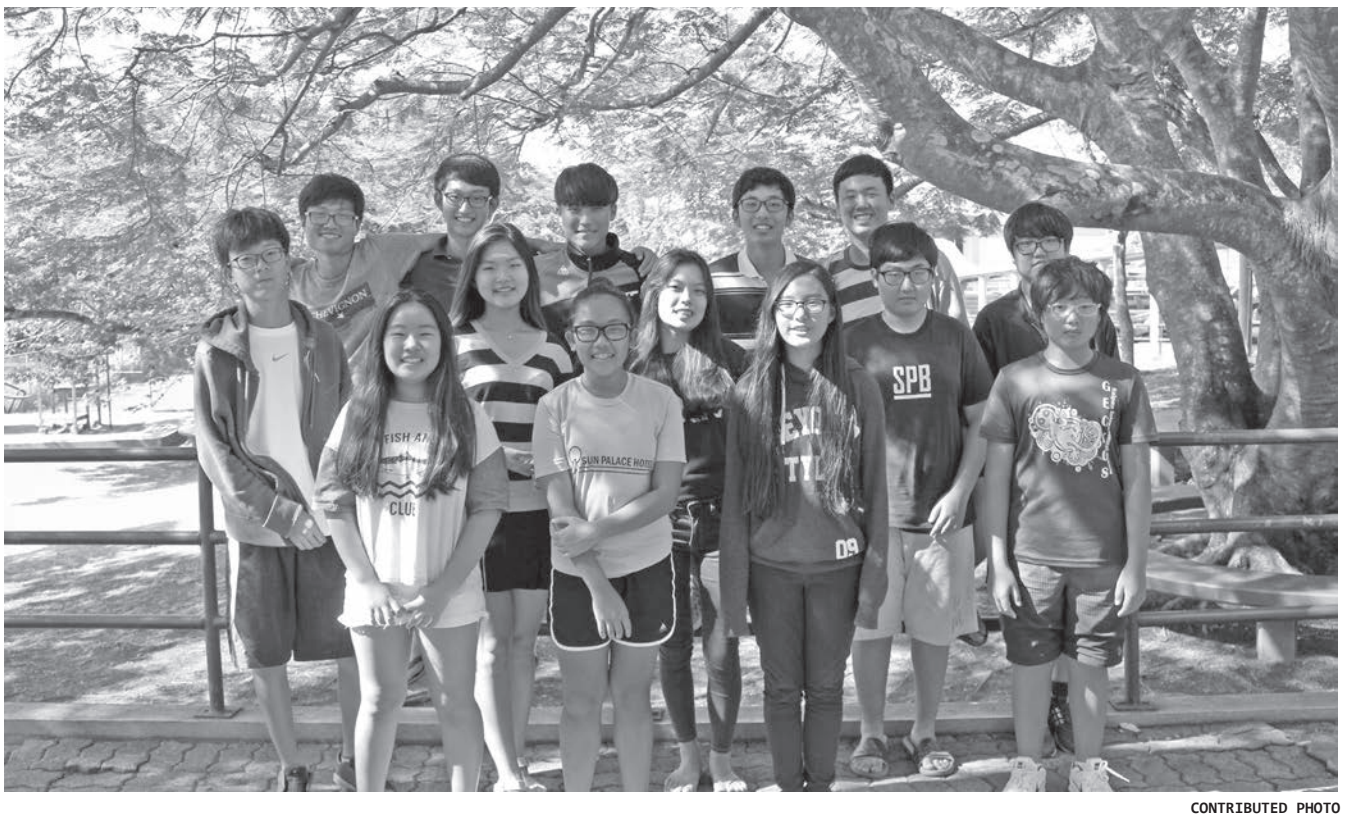
For more information, contact Steve Mullin at 664-6011 or smullin.cnmi.dfw@gmail.com, or visit http://www.cnmidfw.com/. ***(PR)***

SIS touts MathCourt qualifiers

The first qualifying round for the CNMI MathCourt competition took place last Oct. 29, 2016, at the Admiral Herbert G. Hopwood Middle School. This round started at 9am and lasted until almost 2pm. Students from 6th grade to 12th grade participated. A total of 14 out of 32 students from Saipan International School who participated qualified for the regionals, which will be held on Jan. 28. Those who qualified from SIS were (from middle school) Christina Kim, Cevina Hwang, Julianne Hall, Hyeonjae Park, Seunghyun Kim, James Lee (high school) Cerinn Hwang, Ha Young Seo, Hyeonjoon Park, Jaehoon Jang, Jiwoo Kim, Junhee Lee, Michael Lee, and Myungjae Cho.

For individual scores in 7th grade, Christina Kim got first place and Cevina Hwang got fourth place. In high school, for 10th grade, Hyeonjoon Park got second place, while Michael Lee got third place. In 11th grade, Hyunjun Chung got fourth place, and Surui Huang got fifth place. Lastly, for 12th grade, Jaehoon Jang achieved first place, Jiwoo Kim got second place, and Cerinn Hwang got fourth place. For the team round, in the high school division, Jiwoo Kim, Myungjae Cho, and Jaehoon Jang came in first place.

The next qualifying round will be held on Dec. 10 at Tanapag Middle School for the middle school division and at Grace Christian Academy for the high school division. Congratulations to all the qualifiers and we wish future participations good luck in the next round! ***(Julianne Hall)***



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Saipan International School students take part in the CNMI MathCourt competition last Oct. 29, 2016, at the Admiral Herbert G. Hopwood Middle School.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Air Force training at Farallon de Medinilla

ASAN, Guam—The U.S. Air Force will conduct training at the island of Farallon de Medinilla on Dec. 6-8, from 8am to 8pm. The public—especially fishermen, commercial pilots and marine tour operators—are advised to stay clear of the areas during the dates and times indicated. The general location of the training on the island of Farallon de Medinilla will be on a 12-nautical mile radius on all quadrants. ***(PR)***

CUC closed on Constitution Day

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s offices will be closed on Thursday, Dec. 8, 2016, in observance of Constitution Day. Regular business hours will resume on Friday, Dec. 9, 2016. For emergencies, contact the CUC call center at 664-4282. ***(CUC)***

VA benefits outreach

The U.S. Department of Veterans Benefits Administration (non-health) will be conducting a Veterans Benefits Outreach on Dec. 9, 2016, from 9am to 3pm at the Saipan VA Outreach Clinic, MH II Bldg., Suite 206, Marina Heights Business Park in Garapan. This will be a one-on-one outreach. Chris Duenas, legal administrative specialist, will be available to answer questions and take your claims. Points of contact are Ruth Coleman, 322-0035; Chris Duenas, 1-671-648-0090. ***(VA)***

Notice to all 2016 candidates, political parties

The staff of the Office of the Public Auditor will be on Tinian tomorrow, Dec. 7, 2016, to notarize and accept filings of campaign statement of account forms for the 2016 election candidates and political parties. Filers on Tinian may visit the Department of Commerce from 9am to 4pm. Proper identification with both the photo and signature of the candidate and treasurer must be provided. For any inquiries, contact OPA at 322-6481 or 6482. ***(PR)***

Wage and salary statement workshop

The Division of Revenue and Taxation, Department of Finance will be conducting a workshop for the Annual Wage and Salary Statement, Form (W-2CM) for tax year 2016 and other 2016 year-end filing requirements. The workshop will be on Friday, Dec. 16, 2016. The first seminar will be from 8am to 11am and the second will be from 1pm to 4pm at the Pedro P. Tenorio Multi-Purpose Center. Businesses, employers and all payroll service companies are encouraged to attend. Please confirm your attendance by calling the Division of Revenue and Taxation at 664-1000 and 664-1098 or fax at 664-1015. ***(PR)***

Holiday closures at Visitor Center

The American Memorial Park Visitor Center will be closed on Dec. 25, 2016, Christmas Day, and on Jan. 1, 2017, New Year's Day. Park staff would also like to encourage the public to visit the Visitor Center. With the exception of the holidays closed, the VC is open every day from 9am to 5pm. If you have any questions, contact park ranger Brooke Nevitt at 234-7207 or 2020 or email brooke_nevitt@nps.gov. ***(NPS)***

2 NMIS students to represent NMI at thespian competition

Two students of the Northern Marianas International School will be representing the CNMI at the National Junior International Thespian competition in Sacramento, California.

NMIS students Amy Rayn Soliman (7th grade) and John Andrei Bayking (8th grade) will be the NMI representatives for the Monologue event for the U.S.-wide Junior International Thespian Society festival at the Sacramento Convention Center, California, from Feb. 10 to 12, 2017.

NMIS students did an excellent job at the Thespian regional finals participated in by both public and private schools in the CNMI held on Dec. 3, 2016, at the San Vicente Elementary School.

Other members of the NMIS team of regional performers were Mika Vergara, Christian Troy Rosimo, and Sophia Cornelio.

CNMI Team coach George Gomez would like to thank NMIS vice principal Jener A. Pineda, teachers Levi Sobremisana, Grace Rosete, Kimberly Asperin, Criselda Aldan, NMIS administration officer Jane Viola, NMIS events registrar Darlene Sobremisana, voice coach Charry De Guzman and all the parents and staff of NMIS who raised and supported the NMIS team! ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
From left, Northern Marianas International School vice principal Jener A. Pineda, John Andrei Bayking, Amy Rayn Soliman, and coach George Gomez.

Torres commends Trump's choice of Chao

Chao

In alignment with plans for diversifying his cabinet, President-elect Donald J. Trump has announced that he has chosen Elaine L. Chao for secretary of the Department of Transportation.

Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres, who serves as co-chair for Trump's Asian Pacific American Advisory Committee, commended Trump's pick, noting that Chao's expertise is crucial to redeveloping the nation's infrastructure.

"Elaine Chao is the first Asian-American to be appointed twice to a presidential Cabinet. In her professional capacity, she has ensured equal opportunities for all people to build better lives through improved labor enforcement. She has helped restructure department programs during her time as DOL secretary while providing wage security of the nation's workforce. Considering her extensive knowledge of the public and private sector, this illustrates Trump's commitment to transforming the nation for continued economic growth and we look forward to the expansion of our nation's transportation infrastructure," Torres said.

Chao previously served as secretary for the Department of Labor, deputy secretary at the U.S. Department of Transportation, chair of the Federal Maritime Commission, deputy maritime administrator, and a White House fellow. ***(PR)***

Mobil Kagman closed for canopy enhancements

The Mobil service station in Kagman will be closed from Nov. 13 to Dec. 20, 2016, for a planned forecourt canopy upgrade.

Part of the station's plans include an enhancement of the forecourt canopy decking, to include the installation of new energy-efficient lights.

Charles Ewart, president of Mobil Oil Mariana Islands said: "These upgrades are in line with other Mobil canopy replacements done in Saipan over the last three years and reinforces our commitment to better serve the Saipan community.

"We look forward to reopening the service station and unveiling the enhanced canopy in mid-December." ***(PR)***

Fiji Sugar Corp. workers graduate with Australian qualifications

A total of 37 employees of the Fiji Sugar Corp. Labasa Sugar Mill graduated with qualifications in six different courses from the Australia-Pacific Technical College in Labasa last Thursday.

This is the third cohort of graduates who have completed their studies in internationally recognized Australian courses under the European Union-funded training support to the Fiji sugarcane industry project implemented by the APTC.

The project focuses on providing a training program that improves the livelihoods of the sugarcane dependent populations by promoting income generation through sugarcane farming or alternative livelihoods.

Andrew Jacobs, the European Union ambassador to Fiji and the Pacific, said: "I congratulate the 37 graduates from the Fiji Sugar Corp. This is another milestone of the EU-APTC partnership, of which we should be proud. With each new cohort of graduates, the milling capacity of the sugarcane industry is being strengthened."

Of the graduates, 18 students graduated with Certificate III level qualifications in the trades, including Fabrication, Electrotechnology, Diesel Fitting and Fitting and Machining, while 19 students graduated in business courses in Certificate IV in Frontline Management and Certificate IV in Project Management Practice.

The keynote speaker at the graduation, FSC Labasa Sugar Mill general manager Karia Christopher, acknowledged the pivotal role that the EU plays in supporting the continuous improvement in the Fiji sugarcane industry.

He added that the benefits of the training support to the Fiji sugarcane industry project for the students include receiving an internationally-recognized qualification and gaining up-to-date knowledge and skills that would enable them to improve their productivity and efficiency in the workplace and share skills and knowledge with other colleagues.

Christopher encouraged graduates to be assertive with the skills and knowledge that they have gained from their training and to be the "agents of constructive change within the sugar industry and work toward building a better nation."

Australian High Commission representative Tina Seniloli congratulated the graduates on their achievements.

"I am pleased that the Australian government and the EU through our support for APTC have played an important role in these graduates' achievements. I am confident that they will have many opportunities to use their new skills and knowledge to create positive changes to enrich their communities," said Seniloli.

The Australian government engaged APTC to deliver training to the Fiji sugarcane industry project, when the delegated cooperation with the EU was signed in 2013.

The graduation ceremony was attended by guests from the Australian High Commission, EU Programme Coordination Unit, APTC staff, employers and industry stakeholders. ***(APTC)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
A total of 37 employees of the Fiji Sugar Corp. Labasa Sugar Mill graduated with qualifications in six different courses from the Australia-Pacific Technical College in Labasa.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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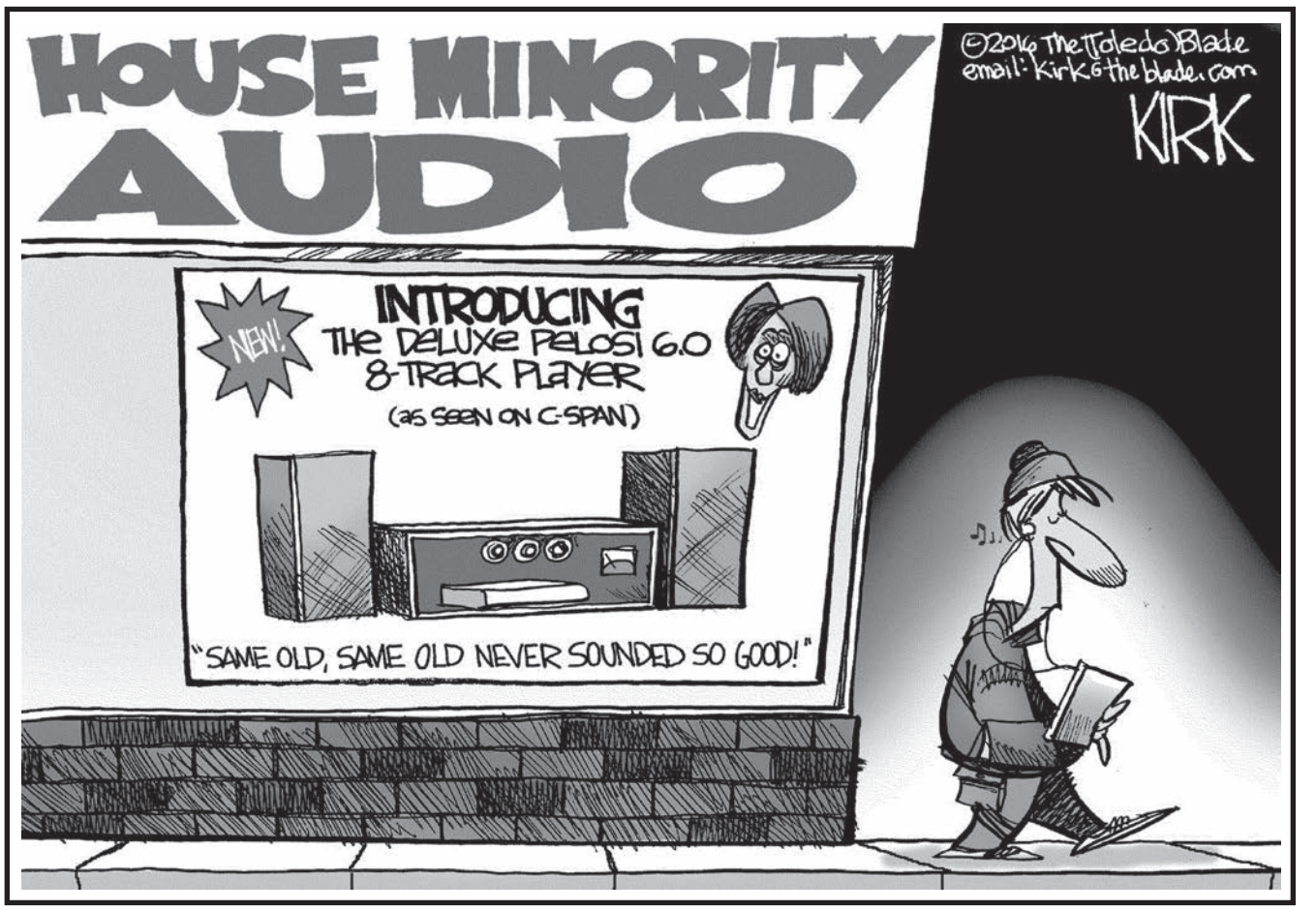


EDITORIAL

Leftover Turkey: Snub by EU is making matters more complex

Turkey, as a country and as a long-term NATO ally of the United States, is coming to present more and more problems as it contends with its own issues.

The European parliament voted Nov. 24 to suspend accession negotiations with Turkey. These have been ongoing for some 29 years but have been kept from completion—and Turkish membership in the European Union—by the hurdles the EU has in place for Turkey to cross. The EU needs Turkish labor and also could be well-served by Turkey as an EU member as a bridge between it and Muslim countries to the east in Asia. At the same time, there is resistance among some EU members to the idea of a large, predominantly Muslim state being added to the EU, composed largely of states that consider themselves Christian.

Primary objection in the EU to Turkish membership—and the proximate cause of the EU parliamentary vote—now centers on some of the steps that the government of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has taken in the wake of the attempted Turkish military coup d'etat directed against his government in July. There have been many arrests, of military officers, journalists, academics and other of Erdogan's opponents, and some of those arrested have been charged in court. Turkey is still seeking the extradition of Fethullah Gulen, living in Pennsylvania, whom Erdogan considers to have been at the root of the failed coup attempt.

The problem for the rest of Europe, apart from giving up the advantages of Turkish EU membership, is that there is still in place a deal under which Turkey takes various actions to restrain the flow of migrants from the wars of the east—in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Yemen—into Europe, in return for concessions that Europe made to Turkey. Erdogan has now said that if the EU does not continue the negotiations, he is going to open the floodgates and let the migrant flow resume. That would be a disastrous development for Western Europe, also tormented by cross-Mediterranean migration from Africa, including from the wars in Libya and Somalia.

In addition, finding Western Europe increasingly hostile, Erdogan has been cozying up to Russia, headed by the West's current villain of the piece, Vladimir Putin, thus reversing alliances that have been in place since World War II. Turkish reorientation also has large implications for the wars in Iraq and Syria. America has a dog in those fights, as does Turkey, on the opposite side, in the form of U.S. military support of both Iraqi and Syrian Kurdish forces. Turkey finds that U.S. relationship troubling, given its own problems with the large—20 or 25 percent—Kurdish population in Turkey.

All in all, fixing relations with Erdogan's Turkey, will be, for Europe and for U.S. President-elect Donald J. Trump, an early and difficult matter on the table.

(c)2016 Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Immigrants won't self-deport

By WAYNE A. CORNELIUS
Los Angeles Times

Wayne A. Cornelius is director emeritus of the Mexican Migration Field Research Program and Distinguished Professor of Political Science at the University of California at San Diego. He wrote this for the Los Angeles Times.

Self-deportation is back in vogue. President-elect Donald Trump's chief immigration advisor, Kris Kobach, told Fox News: "The jobs are going to dry up, the welfare benefits are going to dry up, and a lot of people who may not be criminal aliens may decide, hey, it's getting hard to disobey federal law, and may leave on their own."

Mass self-deportation has been a staple of the anti-immigration movement for more than a decade. Mitt Romney adopted it as his main immigration policy prescription in 2012. Sometimes called the "attrition through enforcement" or "immiseration" approach to immigration control, the logic is to make life so difficult for immigrants to find work that they give up and go home.

Pushing self-deportation is a tacit acknowledgment that carrying out aggressive sweeps to remove millions of immigrants who entered the country illegally is not politically realistic. According to Election Day exit polls, 70 percent of voters believe that such immigrants working in the United States should be offered a path to legal status. Even 34 percent of Trump voters rejected mass deportations.

But the self-deportation option is not terribly realistic either.

The last time large numbers of Mexicans in the U.S. repatriated themselves was during the Great Depression. Between 1929 and 1936, at least 500,000 Mexican workers—by some estimates as many as 2 million—returned to their homeland. Although some were forced out by federal and local authorities, the majority returned to Mexico of their own accord, paying their own way back. The Depression had wiped out their jobs, and scapegoating of immigrants by the Hoover administration had created a hostile environment.

Short of another depression, what would it take to spur another self-deportation wave? Two-thirds of immigrants in the country illegally have lived here for 10 years or more. Removing their access to welfare, as Kobach suggests, won't do the trick—they are already barred from receiving such benefits. Such workers would have to become truly unemployable, not just in some businesses and communities, but in all of them, everywhere.

To achieve that goal, the federal government would have to systematically and aggressively go after employers who hire, workers in the U.S. illegally. But enforcement of immigration law in the workplace has remained at a symbolic level since 1986, when Congress first made it illegal to hire such workers. From 2007 to 2014, the number of employers investigated for violating hiring laws for immigrants averaged fewer than 2,500 per year, nationwide. The vast majority were not prosecuted criminally but simply fined.

The reasons for weak workplace enforcement are widely recognized. For starters, Congress deliberately included a gaping loophole in the Immigration Reform and Control Act, making it extremely difficult to prosecute employers that break the law. The loophole has remained since 1986 because it is politically advantageous.

There has never been much public or congressional appetite for a harsh crackdown on employers, especially the small businesses that depend most heavily on workers in the U.S. illegally. They are pillars of their communities and campaign contributors. Besides, immigration agents have had higher enforcement priorities—tracking down immigrants who committed serious crimes or pose national security threats.

President-elect Trump has called for full implementation of an electronic employment eligibility verification system called E-Verify. Established as a pilot program by immigration authorities in 1996, E-Verify crosschecks basic information provided by job applicants with federal databases. Employer participation is voluntary, and only about 8 percent of businesses are enrolled. Trump has promised to make participation mandatory.

E-Verify, however, is no panacea. It does not prevent immigrants who are ineligible to work from getting jobs by providing valid information pertaining to other people (borrowed documents). And as long as penalties are weak, requiring employers to use E-Verify will not significantly reduce violations.

Will Congress approve crippling fines or even prison sentences for business owners who ignore E-Verify rules? Will lawmakers direct the Justice Department to make these scofflaws a top priority? Unless and until that happens, many employers will continue to view hiring those in the U.S. illegally as a low-risk, high-reward crime. In 2014, the probability that one of the nation's 6 million employers would be investigated for violating immigration laws was 0.03 percent.

When my research team asked hundreds of immigrants working illegally in California how they obtained their most recent U.S. job, more than three out of five reported that their employer probably knew, or knew for sure, that they were not authorized to work in the United States. Absent a significant increase in worksite investigations and criminal prosecutions, such employers will not change their hiring practices.

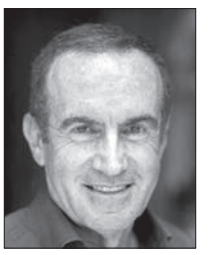
Mass self-deportation is destined to remain a fantasy of immigration hawks. Turning the U.S. into a police state to get rid of a large chunk of the labor force that most citizens consider indispensable is not politically sustainable, let alone economically sensible.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Economic prospects for Cuba don't look promising

By ANDRES OPPENHEIMER
Miami Herald

Andres Oppenheimer is a columnist for the Miami Herald. *Readers may email him at aoppenheimer@miamiherald.com.*



Now that Fidel Castro is gone and the leaders of Canada, Mexico and other countries have made fools of themselves by praising the alleged accomplishments of a dictator who destroyed his country's economy and executed thousands of people, it's time to take a look at Cuba's future. It doesn't look good.

In theory, things should get better. President Raul Castro, 86, has proved to be more pragmatic than his older brother. He could have an easier time implementing the much-needed economic reforms that he announced at the VI Congress of the Communist Party in 2011 and that he vowed to speed up at the VII Congress earlier this year.

Raul Castro's small steps toward a Vietnam-styled, state-run form of capitalism were slowed down because of resistance from Fidel, who remained a powerful figure behind the throne. Without Fidel, the hard-line "Fidelistas" would have less power to stop the reforms, the theory went.

But most economists now agree that Raul Castro faces a perfect storm of bad news that will make it difficult for Cuba's economy to get back on its feet.

"Cuba suffers today its worst economic crisis since the nineties," says economist Carmelo Mesa Lago, a professor emeritus of the University of Pittsburgh who is one of the world's leading analysts of the Cuban economy. "The projections are that the economy will stagnate or decline in 2016, and that the situation will worsen in 2017."

First, Venezuela's subsidized oil shipments to Cuba, which kept the island's economy alive in recent years, fell by about 40 percent during the first six months this year, according to a Reuters news agency report. Venezuela's economy is in a shambles because of the decline in world oil prices and disastrous economic policies, and its oil subsidies to Cuba are likely to continue falling, experts say.

Second, Cuba's exports of medical services—a kind of modern-day slave trade through which the Cuban regime sends tens of thousands of physicians to Venezuela, Brazil and Angola and pockets the bulk of their salaries—may be endangered. Venezuela has a hard time paying for these services, and Brazil's new center-right government may not renew these government-to-government contracts.

Third, Cuba's production of nickel and sugar is depressed because of low commodity prices and the destruction of the country's industries over the past 60 years. And, thanks to Fidel Castro's revolution, Cuba today imports more than 70 percent of its food.

Fourth, tourism—the island's biggest hope since President Barack Obama's opening to Cuba in 2014—may decline if U.S. President-elect Donald Trump follows through with his Nov. 28 threat to "terminate" Obama's deal with the island. The return of U.S. airlines and cruise ships filled with American tourists to Cuba over the past year had helped drive up foreign tourism.

"The most optimistic forecast for Cuba is that after a few decades of struggle and reorientation, it will end up at the income level of the Dominican Republic," wrote George Mason University economics professor Tyler Cowen in the Miami Herald.

He added that while the World Bank estimates Cuba's GDP at $6,000 per capita, that measure is based on an unrealistic exchange rate. Cuba's real GDP is more likely not much higher than Nicaragua's $2,000 per capita, he said.

"Had Cuba not had a communist revolution is 1959, it could have been one of the most successful Latin American economies," Cowen wrote.

My opinion: Instead of praising a dictator who didn't have the courage to compete in a free election in nearly six decades, the leaders of Mexico, Canada and other countries should have cited Cuba's revolution as an example of a failed economic model, which is going from bad to worse.

If Trump plays his cards well—a big if—he will leave Cuba alone and not do anything that will give the Cuban dictatorship an excuse to roll back its timid reforms. Raul Castro is scheduled to step down in early 2018, and his successors may have to concede what the vast majority of Cubans have already concluded: that communism is the longest—and bloodiest—road between capitalism and capitalism.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The pianist from Mars

If you read my letter of last week, I set forth the premise that a writer's job was to be interesting. If the subject matter was controversial, so be it. It the subject matter was actually true, so much the better.

What follows is certainly controversial, but there is no way to know if it's true, unless eyewitness reports are to be believed. Either way, it's fascinating.

According to those who study UFOs, aliens, and related matters, there are dozens of species of alien beings who regularly visit our planet. The most famous of these are the "grays"—tiny beings with large heads and enormous black eyes. There are others: some that resemble a praying mantis, those who are reptilian, and—perhaps least known—the Nordics.

Gould

The Nordics resemble humans almost exactly. They are generally tall, fair, and can blend in with ordinary humans. And yet they possess extraordinary abilities that they conceal. Sometimes the Nordics breed with humans and produce offspring that possess both human and alien attributes.

In 1957 a Canadian pianist, Glenn Gould, traveled to Russia to perform a series of concerts. Although he had performed in New York, and had released his first recording, he was unknown to the rest of the world. Gould was totally unknown in Russia because of the Soviet-era blackout of anything from the West. Therefore, Gould's trip was something of an anomaly, but not without precedent.

Previously, Russian musicians Emil Gilels and David Oistrakh had traveled to the United States and performed to glowing reviews. It was the first time Russian artists ever performed outside of the Soviet Union.

In reciprocation, the Soviet Ministry of Culture extended an invitation to Glenn Gould, an "unknown" Western musician. This was unprecedented because Gould was only 27 years old and did not have a well-established track record of performances. Still, Gould's manager, Walter Homberger, persisted and was able to secure an invitation for Gould.

At Gould's first Moscow concert—Johann Sebastian Bach's *The Art of the Fugue*—not many people showed up to hear him play. The auditorium was only half full. However, at the intermission, the audience rushed out to phone their friends so that they might, at least, see the second half of the program. The intermission lasted 45 or 50 minutes, to accommodate the new arrivals.

When Gould's concert resumed, the auditorium was packed. By the end of the performance, Gould not only received a thunderous ovation, which lasted several minutes, a basket of flowers was brought to the stage. All of this is beautifully documented in a YouTube video: Glenn Gould—The Russian Journey.

Those who witnessed the performance received a "positive shock" and a "strange feeling of exhilaration." "Did you hear what happened? It was a miracle!"

A piano student who attended said, "He had to be from Mars. He was so precise, so even in his tempo. You could hear everything." A Russian composer, who also attended, remarked, "I still firmly believe that he was an alien. It is simply not possible for a human to play like that."

Was Glenn Gould an alien? There is no way to know. But nobody ever played like Gould—before or since. He was indeed "otherworldly." Everything about Gould was off-the-charts: his intellect, his technique, and his vast array of idiosyncrasies. He transcended art itself, and his music and uniqueness remain the stuff of legend. There was simply nobody like Glenn Gould, ever.

Russ Mason
As Teo, Saipan

I donut niid edukashun; I hab kommon cents

Editor's Note: The following is being published as a series due to its length.

Don't need an education? My friend, Larry, didn't think he needed to take the prescription that his doctor had ordered either. He died. To say you don't need education, besides being a poor role model to our youth who do need a lifelong education, is like telling your doctor you don't need dialysis, or chemo, or heart surgery when, in fact, you have diabetes, cancer, or a weak heart valve. Steve Jobs, former CEO of Apple and deceased, had a life-threatening but curable disease. As with many wealthy, creative types, he thought he could overcome it by using "alternatives." Just before he died, he was noted to have said, "I guess I waited too long; I should have acted sooner (followed his doctor's recommendations)."

Common sense springs first from information. An education accelerates the acquisition of this knowledge. If you don't "need" an education, you probably don't have...

- A large, varied, personal library at home. Or...
- A record at the public library showing all the books you've checked out (and read). Or...
- A library record or Internet provider record showing all the research you've done online over the years.

If your knowledge base is small, then so is your understanding and wisdom takes a distant third place. Here on Saipan, we have a "new" law that allows government cars to be fully tinted, heavily tinted (dark) in fact. Is it safe? No. Millions of dollars have been spent in research to show that it is unsafe for the driver and for those around him to have a tinted windshield, or a tinted rear window, or front-side windows tinted more that 70 percent. That's right—it's a law that is unsafe for the public. And this is easily found doing a Google search. "But it keeps out harmful UV rays." There is clear tint available on the market including here on Saipan that blocks 98 percent of these UV rays. Nope, the law has nothing to do with UV. "But why this law?" Privacy. Why would an elected official want to hide from the public who elected him or her likely has to do with having sex with someone other that their spouse or/and the use of drugs in that publically-owned car? Think about it. Good common sense? Naw.

Over on Tinian my friend realized last September 2015 that the Dynasty was closed for good. The legs might twitch like those in the old black and white cartoons but it was dead. So he built 40 to 50 business concepts that 40 to 50 Tinian families could implement part-time or full-time, within a short period of time with little or no money. But his delight was the "Tinian Island Trading Company" that could generate $200,000 in three months (and as much as $1 million) or the people could create a new industry that would:

- Put Tinian on everyone's Pacific map.
- Train and employ a dozen local people to start in high tech, respected jobs viewed as solid careers.
- Generate income for the island year after year after year.
- And put a smile on every Tinian local's face.

But the mayor said he didn't have the time. Common sense?

To be continued

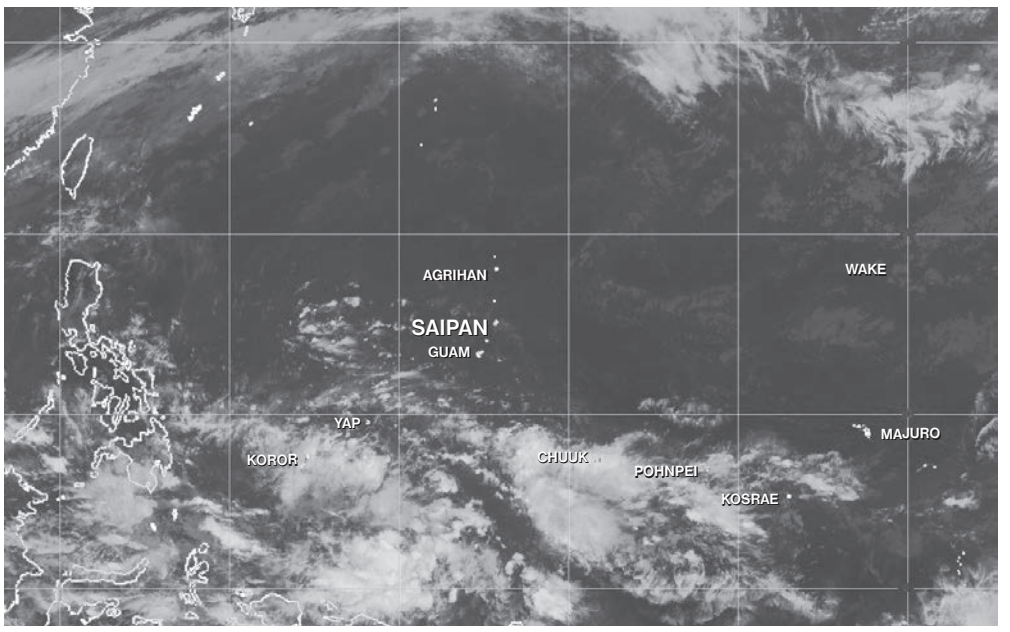
Arnold J. Mesa
Chinatown, Saipan

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲88° ▼78°	▲88° ▼78°	▲88° ▼78°	▲87° ▼78°	▲87° ▼78°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 6:39 AM, MONDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2016
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Nixed scattered showers in today`s forecast. Satellite and radar imagery did show a few showers over the local area, but not enough coverage to be considered scattered. Breezy east winds of 15 to 25 mph will prevail across the Marianas today. Winds will decrease slightly to 15 to 20 tonight and Tuesday. Models show an increased chance of showers Tuesday night through Wednesday night. These showers will be the result of trade-wind convergence. Deep layer moisture is not predicted to be high so just expect mostly cloudy skies while keeping shower coverage isolated.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▼ ▲
Guam and Rota	Partly cloudy	82 / 87 °F
Palau	Mostly cloudy	79 / 85 °F
Yap	Mostly cloudy	79 / 85 °F
Chuuk	Partly cloudy	80 / 86 °F
Pohnpei	Strong thunderstorms	78 / 82 °F
Kosrae	Partly sunny	80 / 84 °F
Majuro	Partly cloudy	83 / 85 °F

AROUND THE GLOBE		▼ ▲
Auckland	Partly cloudy	55 / 72 °F
Beijing	High level clouds	16 / 39 °F
Hong Kong	Partly cloudy	63 / 71 °F
Honolulu	Showers	69 / 77 °F
London	Broken clouds	36 / 51 °F
Los Angeles	Cloudy	47 / 62 °F
Manila	Cloudy	76 / 82 °F
Melbourne	Mostly sunny	54 / 68 °F
Miami	Cloudy	75 / 80 °F
New York	Light showers	37 / 44 °F
Osaka	Mostly sunny	40 / 55 °F
Paris	Partly cloudy	33 / 48 °F
Pusan	Sunny	30 / 47 °F
Rome	Partly cloudy	43 / 50 °F
Salem	Overcast	29 / 39 °F
San Francisco	Morning clouds	46 / 56 °F
Seoul	High level clouds	24 / 35 °F
Tokyo	Mostly sunny	44 / 62 °F
Washington, DC	Rain	37 / 44 °F

NMI CRIME STOPPERS
Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:
- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		
5:50 AM	LOW TIDE	0.03 Feet
1:04 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.9 Feet
7:21 PM	LOW TIDE	1.06 Feet
11:40 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.45 Feet

	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:30 AM	5:46 PM
Wednesday	6:31 AM	5:46 PM
Thursday	6:31 AM	5:47 PM
Friday	6:32 AM	5:47 PM
Saturday	6:32 AM	5:47 PM

	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	11:30 AM	11:30 PM	
Wednesday	12:14 AM	-	
Thursday	-	12:23 AM	12:59 PM
Friday	-	1:18 AM	1:45 PM
Saturday	-	2:15 AM	2:32 PM

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 5, 2016

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA6394	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA6392	8:40am	9:30am	Daily
UA6391	1:30pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7 via Rota
UA6390	2:20pm	3:10pm	2, 3, 6
UA6398	6:05pm	6:55pm	Daily
UA6396	9:50pm	10:40pm	Daily

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA6391	1:30pm	2:05pm	1, 4, 5, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA6391	2:35pm	3:10pm	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL297	4:20pm	7:00pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ626	2:20am	6:00am	1
OZ626	2:50am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
7C3403	4:45am	8:30am	Daily
LJ652	2:10pm	6:05pm	Daily
7C3401	4:00pm	7:45pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	4, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764	1:30am	6:35am	3, 5, 7

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/701	2:20am	11:05am	1 via ICN
OZ626/701	2:50am	11:05am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA6394/191	4:15am	8:55am	2, 3, 6, 7 via GUM
UA6394/PR111	4:15am	9:15am	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
PR1572	5:45am	7:45am	7, 4
UA6391/183	1:30pm	8:50pm	5 via Rota-GUM
UA6391/183	1:30pm	9:10pm	1, 4, 7 via Rota-GUM
UA6391/193	1:30pm	10:35pm	5 via Rota-GUM-ROR
UA6390/183	2:20pm	8:50pm	2 via GUM
UA6390/183	2:20pm	9:10pm	3, 6 via GUM
UA6390/193	2:20pm	10:35pm	2 via GUM-ROR

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

HX077	2:00am	5:00am	1, 4
OZ626/721	2:20am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA6391/159	1:30pm	9:55pm	1, 5 via Rota-GUM
UA6390/159	2:20pm	9:55pm	3, 6 via GUM

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA6393	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA6395	7:15am	8:05am	Daily
UA6391	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7
UA6390	12:10pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6 via Rota
UA6397	4:45pm	5:35pm	Daily
UA6399	8:30pm	9:20pm	Daily

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA6390	12:10pm	12:45pm	2, 3, 6

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA6390	1:15pm	1:50pm	2, 3, 6

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:30am	3:05pm	Daily

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

LJ651	7:30am	1:10pm	Daily
7C3402	9:30am	3:00pm	Daily
OZ625	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ625	8:15pm	1:45am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
7C3404	10:10pm	3:40am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:05pm	1:55am+1	3, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763	4:40pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA190/6397	9:55am	5:35pm	2, 3, 6, 7 via GUM
OZ702/625	12:15pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/625	12:15pm	1:45am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR1571	10:25pm	4:45am+1	3, 6
UA192/6395	9:45pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via ROR-GUM
PR110/UA6395	10:05pm	8:05am+1	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/6395	10:25pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/6395	11:30pm	8:05am+1	2, 5 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ722/625	1:10pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/625	1:10pm	1:45am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
HX076	5:30pm	12:30am+1	3, 7
UA116/6395	9:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; 7C: Jeju Air; HX: Hong Kong Airlines; LJ: Jin Air; ETD: Estimated Time of Departure;ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
6:30AM	6:45AM	Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
12:30NN	12:45NN	Daily
1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
12:00NN	12:15NN	Daily
1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:45AM	8:15AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:00PM	4:30PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:45PM	5:15PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

Christmas in the Marianas 2016

PHOTOS By ERWIN ENCINARES

Tourists check out the various Christmas trees during the opening night of Christmas in the Marianas at the Paseo de Marianas in Garapan.

A few of the 17 Christmas trees decorated by various schools on Saipan are taken in by both residents and tourists alike during the opening of Christmas in the Marianas at the Paseo de Marianas in Garapan.

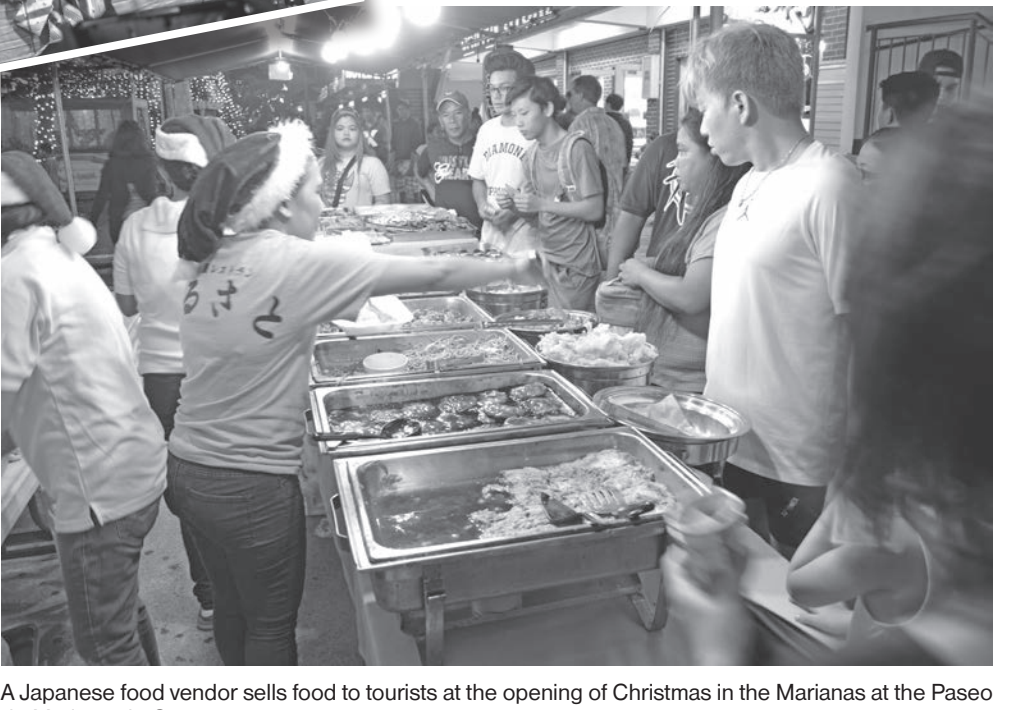
Students of Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School perform for the annual Caroling Competition.

Multiple food vendors serve food and refreshments to tourist and residents for the opening of Christmas in the Marianas at the Paseo de Marianas in Garapan.

A huge number of people turn out for the opening night of Christmas in the Marianas at the Paseo de Marianas in Garapan.

Mt. Carmel School elementary students perform their piece during the annual Caroling Competition.

A family checks out one of the Christmas trees on display during the opening night of Christmas in the Marianas at the Paseo de Marianas in Garapan.



A Japanese food vendor sells food to tourists at the opening of Christmas in the Marianas at the Paseo de Marianas in Garapan.

Nation

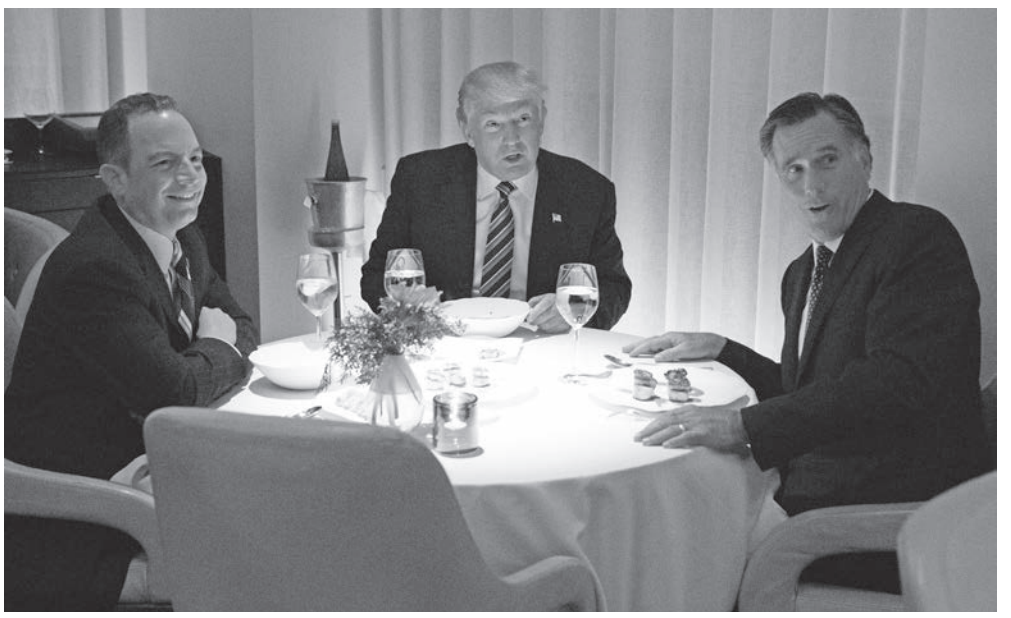
Trump faces pushback from base, allies over Romney musings

NEW YORK (AP)—As President-elect Donald Trump stood onstage during the debut night of his "thank you" tour and teased that he was about to announce a surprise Cabinet pick, some in the Ohio crowd bellowed: "No Romney! No Romney!"

Trump's administration selections have largely been cheered by close allies and supporters. Many have deep ties to Washington and Wall Street that would seem contradictory to the populist, outsider campaign Trump ran with a promise to "drain the swamp" of corruption and elitism in government.

But the possible selection of Romney, who has been on Trump's shortlist for secretary of state despite being a forceful critic throughout the campaign, has been met with trepidation from many of the working-class voters that propelled the Republican to his astonishing victory.

Kim Doss loudly cheered Trump at the Cincinnati rally but will not forgive Romney, the 2012 Republican nominee, for the "witch hunt" he held "to make sure Trump wasn't the nominee."



AP
President-elect Donald Trump, center, eats dinner with Mitt Romney, right, and Trump Chief of Staff Reince Priebus at Jean-Georges restaurant, Tuesday, Nov. 29, 2016, in New York.

"I think he went out of his way to make that happen, which totally backfired on him," said Doss, a 46-year-old accountant from Hebron, Kentucky. "He obviously said some really ugly things about (Trump)."

Some of Trump's most prominent allies, including his campaign manager, have taken the unprecedented step of using national television interviews to bash Romney. And nearly a dozen Trump backers who attended the Ohio victory lap vehemently denounced Romney as a choice to be the nation's top diplomat.

Then there's the Russia twist: Russian politicians are concerned about reports that Trump would even consider Romney as secretary of state because of Romney's harsh stance on Russia. Trump has said he would like to improve U.S.-Russian relations.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said in an interview with the NTV channel that Trump's business accomplishments show him to be a "smart man."

He added that "if he is a smart man, that means that he will fairly soon become aware of a different level of responsibility. We expect that he act with these considerations in mind."

Rally-goer Josh Kanowitz said he was willing to give Trump the benefit of the doubt for some of his establishment-friendly picks—including former Goldman Sachs partner Steve Mnuchin for Treasury secretary—but he visibly recoiled at the suggestion that Romney would be a team-of-rivals style selection from Trump.

Romney, the GOP's 2012 president nominee, eviscerated Trump in a March speech, delivering broadsides against the New York businessman who he deemed "a con man" and "a fake."

"His domestic policies would lead to recession," said Romney. "His foreign policies would make America and the world less safe. He has neither the temperament nor the judgment to be president and his personal qualities would mean that America would cease to be a shining city on a hill."

Unlike many establishment Republicans, Romney never wavered in his opposition to Trump during the campaign and did not reveal whether he voted for him. Despite that, Trump, who deeply prizes loyalty and rarely forgives foes, summoned him to his New Jersey golf club last month to interview for secretary of State. After the meeting, Trump was said to be taken by the way Romney "looks the part" of a globe-trotting diplomat, according to people close to the transition process.

In nominating Romney, Trump would be signaling his willingness to heal campaign wounds and reach out to traditional Republicans who were deeply skeptical of his experience and temperament. The president-elect has added at least one other former critic to his team: South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley, who attacked the businessman for being slow to denounce support from white supremacists, was Trump's pick to be ambassador to the United Nations.

Gun-rights backers vow to 'go on offense' during Trump years

IOWA CITY, Iowa (AP)—Firearms enthusiasts who embraced Donald Trump's campaign and his full-throated support of the Second Amendment are expecting a sweeping expansion of gun rights under his administration and a Congress firmly in Republican hands.

Among their priorities: eliminating gun-free zones at schools, reducing requirements for background checks and ensuring that concealed carry handgun permits from one state are recognized everywhere in the U.S.

"This is our historic moment to go on offense and to defeat the forces that have aligned against our freedom once and for all," Wayne LaPierre, chief executive of the National Rifle Association, said in a video after the Nov. 8 election. "The individual right to carry a firearm in defense of our lives and our families does not and should not end at any state line."

In pursuing their agenda, the gun lobby and its GOP supporters could find themselves at odds with two other tenets of Republican orthodoxy: states' rights and local control.

"It would be ironic to see conservatives who long have professed a belief in states' rights override states' choices in this area," said Erwin Chemerinsky, dean of the University of California Irvine School of Law.

One of the NRA's paramount goals is getting Congress to pass a law requiring all states to recognize concealed-carry handgun permits issued by any other state. Currently, many permit holders must leave their weapons at home when traveling or risk violating other states' laws. NRA supporters say permits should be treated like driver's licenses.

Trump endorsed the idea during the campaign, but it is likely to face intense opposition from Democrats in states with tight gun restrictions, including California and the president-elect's home state of New York.

States make their own judgments on who should be allowed to have a concealed carry permit, and their eligibility requirements vary based on an applicant's criminal history, age and training.

ACROSS THE NATION

2 cars submerged in San Antonio sinkhole; 1 man rescued

SAN ANTONIO (AP)—A San Antonio official says a 60-year-old man has been rescued after two cars were submerged inside a sinkhole created when a large sewer line ruptured. San Antonio Fire Battalion Chief Brian O'Neil tells the Express-News that a woman sustained minor injuries when she rescued the man who drove into the sinkhole Sunday night. O'Neil says the man and woman were taken to the hospital and are "in good shape." Authorities were trying to determine if there was another person inside one of the vehicles. Officials were trying to figure out a way to stop the flow of the sewer line to allow emergency crews to get through. The San Antonio Water System reports that there had been four other sewer spill overflows on Sunday.

Puppy given alcohol leads to charges for 3 Ohio residents

ASHTABULA, Ohio (AP)—Three Ohio residents accused of giving alcoholic drinks to a puppy have been charged with misdemeanor cruelty to a companion animal after one of the defendants posted a picture of the passed-out dog on Facebook. The Star-Beacon reports the three adults from Ashtabula (ash-tuh-BYOO'-luh) were charged after one of them said another intentionally gave vodka and Kahlua to the 3-month-old puppy, and the third posted the photo. Someone called police after seeing the Facebook photo. The city's animal control officer removed the dog from the home and took it to the local Animal Protective League.

Ohio man to be sentenced in plot to attack US Capitol

CINCINNATI (AP)—A 22-year-old man accused of plotting to attack the U.S. Capitol in support of the Islamic State group will soon find out how many more years he must serve in prison. Christopher Lee Cornell of suburban Cincinnati was arrested by the FBI Jan. 14, 2015. He pleaded guilty to three charges including attempted murder of U.S. officials and employees. Court documents show Cornell said he wanted to attack during President Barack Obama's State of the Union address. Prosecutors have recommended a 30-year sentence to U.S. District Judge Sandra Beckwith. Cornell's attorneys say a significantly lower term would be more appropriate. They say he has rejected "radical Islamic propaganda" that influenced him. Defense attorneys plan to call a psychologist Monday to testify in the sentencing hearing about Cornell's mental condition.

Federal government blocks Dakota Access oil pipeline route

CANNON BALL, N.D. (AP)—The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said Sunday that it won't grant an easement for the Dakota Access oil pipeline in southern North Dakota, handing a victory to the Standing Rock Sioux tribe and its supporters, who argued the project would threaten the tribe's water source and cultural sites.

North Dakota's leaders criticized the decision, with Gov. Jack Dalrymple calling it a "serious mistake" that "prolongs the dangerous situation" of having several hundred protesters who are camped out on federal land during cold, wintry weather. U.S. Rep. Kevin Cramer said it's a "very chilling signal" for the future of infrastructure in the United States.

The four-state, $3.8 billion project is largely complete except for the now-blocked segment underneath Lake Oahe, a Missouri River reservoir. Assistant Secretary for Civil Works Jo-Ellen Darcy said in a news release that her decision was based on the need to "explore alternate routes" for the pipeline's crossing. Her full decision doesn't rule out that it could cross under the reservoir or north of Bismarck.

"Although we have had continuing discussion and exchanges of new information with the Standing Rock Sioux and Dakota Access, it's clear that there's more work to do," Darcy said. "The best way to complete that work responsibly and expeditiously is to explore alternate routes for the pipeline crossing."

The company constructing the pipeline, Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners, had said it was unwilling to reroute the project. It had no immediate comment Sunday.

The decision came a day before the government's deadline for the several hundred people at the Oceti Sakowin, or Seven Council Fires, encampment to leave the federal land. But demonstrators say they're prepared to stay, and authorities say they won't forcibly remove them.

As the news spread Sunday, cheers and cheers and chants of "mni wichoni"—"water is life" in Lakota Sioux—broke out among the protesters. Some in the crowd banged drums. Miles Allard, a member of the Standing Rock Sioux, said he was pleased but remained cautious, saying, "We don't know what Trump is going to do."

"The whole world is watching," Allard added. "I'm telling all our people to stand up and not to leave until this is over."

Warehouse fire death toll climbs to 33, and includes teens

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP)—The death toll from a fire that tore through a warehouse hosting a late-night dance party climbed to 33 on Sunday as firefighters painstakingly combed through rubble for others believed to still be missing.

Less than half of the charred remains of the partly collapsed structure had been searched, and crews clearing debris were expected to find more bodies as they advanced, Alameda County Sheriff's Sgt. Ray Kelly said.

Officials said they have identified seven people who were killed.

Among them is Donna Kellogg, according to her father, Keith Slocum. He declined additional comment.

Kelly said those killed range in age from teenagers to 30-plus years old.

Anxious family members who feared the worst gathered at the sheriff's office to await word on their loved ones. They were told they may have to provide DNA samples to help identify remains.

The building known as the "Ghost Ship" had been carved into artist studios and was an illegal home for a rotating cast of a dozen or more people, according to former denizens who said it was a cluttered death trap with few exits, piles of wood and a mess of snaking electric cords.

"If you were going there for a party, you wouldn't be aware of the maze that you have to go through to get out," said Danielle Boudreaux, a former friend of the couple who ran the warehouse.

As many as 100 people were there for a party Friday night when the fire broke out just before midnight. Fire officials were still investigating the cause of the blaze, but they said clutter fueled the flames, there were no sprinklers inside and few exits to escape.

Boudreaux identified the operators of the Satya Yuga collective as Derick Ion Almena and Micah Allison. She had a falling out with Almena when she convinced Allison's parents and sister about a year ago that the warehouse was a dangerous place for the couple's three children to live.

The couple rented out five recreational vehicles and other nooks on the ground floor as living spaces. A rickety makeshift staircase led to a second floor where concerts were held. Former residents said there frequently was no electricity or running water.

Oakland planning officials opened an investigation last month after repeated complaints from neighbors who said trash was piling up and people were illegally living in the building zoned as a warehouse. An inspector who went to the premises couldn't get inside, said Darin Ranelletti, of the Oakland Planning Department.

The city had not confirmed people lived there, but a former resident said she had been lured in part by reasonable rents in a region beset with a housing shortage and exorbitant leases driven by the tech boom.

Shelley Mack said she wasn't told the residence was illegal until after she moved in a couple years ago and stayed for four to five months, paying about $700 a month. She said she was instructed to tell visitors it was a 24-hour workspace for artists and when outsiders or inspectors planned to visit, residents would scurry to hide clothes and bedding.

"It's like a horror house. Just horrors in there," she said.

To a first-time visitor, though, the labyrinth of uniquely designed spaces was "stunning," said Alastair Boone, a University of California, Berkeley student who arrived at the party with five friends around 11 p.m.

Photographs from before the fire showed that the Bohemian community of musicians, painters, woodworkers, dancers and other artists had decorated the scene with Tibetan prayer flags, Christmas lights and scores of wooden statues of Buddha, the virgin Mary, Jesus Christ, elephants and dragons that sat atop pianos and turntables. Tapestries hung from the walls, mannequin legs and arms stuck out from the ceiling and a small wooden spot of floor was used for art performances.

"It was obvious to me everyone who lives there cared about each other and were invested in a space they made a home," Boone said.

Almena did not immediately respond to emails or phone numbers associated with him. Authorities declined to talk about the manager, saying they were focused on recovering the bodies and consoling families.

A man identified as Derick Ion posted a Facebook message early Saturday, saying, "Everything I worked so hard for is gone. Blessed that my children and Micah were at a hotel safe and sound." He drew rebukes online from others who said he was warned the building was unsafe.

Almena, 46, has lived in California since at least 1990, mostly in Los Angeles, where public records show he was evicted from a North Hollywood apartment in Los Angeles in 1993.

AP

A woman, wishing to not be identified, cries at the scene of a warehouse fire, Sunday, Dec. 4, 2016, in Oakland, Calif.

Teens and music makers among California warehouse fire victims

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP)—Teenagers, the son of a local sheriff's deputy and young artists who loved music are among the dozens of people who died when a fire broke out at an underground dance party in a warehouse that visitors called a death trap.

The victims of a party Friday night in Oakland included 17-year-olds and people from Europe and Asia, Alameda County Sheriff's Sgt. Ray Kelly said. Authorities have recovered 33 bodies, with more expected as crews continue to clear debris.

The city of Oakland identified some of the victims as Cash Askew, 22, David Clines, 35, Travis Hough, 35, and Donna Kellogg, 32, all of Oakland; Nick Gomez-Hall, 25, of Coronado, Sara Hoda, 30, of Walnut Creek, and Brandon Chase Wittenauer, 32, of Hayward.

Officials said they had identified an eighth victim, but they were not releasing the name because the person was 17 years old.

Kelly also revealed the death of a deputy's son at a news conference Sunday, but he did not release the name.

Kellogg's father said he was not ready to comment further on his daughter's death.

As names of the dead were being announced, friends and family of the missing anxiously awaited news.

A tearful Tammy Tasoff, 29, called Peter Wadsworth a best friend who was like an older brother to her.

The dental student said Wadsworth always looked out for her, doing the little things that would make her life easier. He would organize her messy files and give her advice and fix her computer if she needed help, Tasoff said. He bought video games because he knew she loved them, and he would often watch her play, she said.

"Usually he'd say let's play video games and then he'd say no, I just want to watch you play. He'd make me food. He took really good care of me. He was like my big brother," she said, sobbing.

Andy Kershaw, a DJ, has several friends missing from the party, including his wife, photographer Amanda Allen, and a fellow DJ, Johnny Igaz. He said he had not heard from authorities as of early Sunday.

Kershaw called his wife vibrant, awesome and magnetic.

Kershaw had never heard of the warehouse, and he was appalled by the crowded and unsafe conditions. "The whole point of a warehouse party is it's supposed to be an empty warehouse," he said.

Igaz was reportedly playing a set when the fire broke out. He listed as a record buyer at Green Apple Books and Music in San Francisco. His Facebook page was littered with tearful posts from friends who called him a beautiful soul and a true friend.

Some friends and loved ones are holding out hope.

Yuri Kundin of San Francisco said he is awaiting word about his friends, Alex Ghassan and Hanna Henriikka Ruax. He hasn't heard from the couple for the last few days and has plastered notes looking for them on social media. Henriikka Ruax is from Finland.

"We're just hoping to hear some good news from a hospital," he told reporters Sunday outside a sheriff's building where friends and family had gathered to hear about their loved ones. "We don't know what's happening."

Former tenant: Run-down warehouse sometimes lacked utilities

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP)—Shelley Mack says she didn't know the converted Oakland warehouse known as the "Ghost Ship" was an illegal residence until after she moved in, when she was instructed to tell visitors it was a 24-hour workspace for artists.

The building was often freezing cold. Water and power were sometimes stolen from neighbors, who would get angry and shut them off. Once, a generator blew up, and residents quickly doused the flames, she said.

Mack, a 58-year-old tech sales worker and jewelry maker, lived in the warehouse for four or five months about two years ago. On Friday night, fire ripped through the cluttered space during a dance party, killing at least 33 people. Oakland officials say the death toll is expected to rise.

The building was crammed with rugs, old sofas and a garage-sale-like collection of pianos, paintings, turntables, statues and other items that quickly fed the flames.

Mack recalled a jumble of extension cords and heavy musical equipment.

"That place was just a death trap," she said. "I didn't think it was going to last this long before it went up or somebody shut it down."

Mack found the rental in a Facebook ad and paid about $700 a month to live there, along with a security deposit of the same amount and a one-time contribution of about $700 to a fund meant to go toward improvements. She said none were ever made.

"It's a good example of people taking advantage of people because they had no other options," Mack said. "People make businesses off scamming people online when they're looking for a place."

When inspectors or other outsiders came to visit, she and other residents scurried to hide clothes, bedding and other evidence anyone was living there.

One doorway was blocked, Mack said, because it led to the property of a neighbor who'd been in a dispute with the operators, whom she and other former tenants and friends identified as 46-year-old Derick Ion and his 40-year-old wife, Micah Allison.

"They lure you in with all these promises about what they're going to do with your deposit and your rent," she said. "They don't do any of it. They just party with it."

Public records show Ion's full name is Derick Ion Almena and that he has lived in California since at least 1990, mostly in Los Angeles, before moving to Oakland in 2006. Allison spent much of her life in Northern California.

The Satya Yuga Collective, one of two groups affiliated with the space, advertised it as a location for anyone with an open mind.

"Seeking all shamanic rattlesnake sexy jungle jazz hobo gunslingers looking for a space to house gear, use studio, develop next level Shaolin discipline after driving your taxi cab late at night, build fusion earth home bomb bunker spelunker shelters, and plant herbaceous colonies in the sun & air," its Facebook page advertised.

Neither Almena nor Allison answered telephone calls placed to numbers associated with them. They did not respond to email messages from The Associated Press.

Danielle Boudreaux, a 40-year-old hairdresser, said she became fast friends with the couple when they met eight years ago before a falling out about a year ago over conditions at the warehouse.

Access to the second floor—where there was a room for concerts and a home for the couple and their children—was a rickety, homemade staircase, she said.

"Calling it a staircase gives you the idea that it was a set of stairs. It was not," Boudreaux said. "It was random pieces of wood put together to create something that you could get up to the top floor on. But it was not what most people would consider a staircase. It was like a jimmy-rigged makeshift staircase. As soon as you stepped on it, it wobbled all over the place."

Boudreaux said the couple was constantly trying to keep enough tenants to cover the warehouse rent, renting out recreational vehicles that were parked on the first floor as well as other living spaces, and charging for the parties that were held there.

Asia

PH vice president to quit Cabinet, stay on as VP

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The Philippine vice president said Sunday that she will resign her Cabinet post, citing "major differences in principles and values" with President Rodrigo Duterte and an unspecified plot to remove her from the vice presidency.

Leni Robredo, a human rights lawyer and respected political newcomer, said in a statement that she will tender her resignation Monday as housing secretary, an appointment made by Duterte, but will stay on in her elected post as vice president.

In the Philippines, presidents and vice presidents are separately elected and have often come from rival political parties, like Duterte and Robredo.

"I will not allow the vice presidency to be stolen. I will not allow the will of the people to be thwarted," Robredo said without elaborating. "I will continue to serve the Filipino family and fulfill their dream for a better life."

Her resignation comes amid a political storm Duterte has faced over his decision to allow the burial of long-dead dictator Ferdinand Marcos in the country's Heroes' Cemetery and a bloody government crackdown against illegal drugs that has alarmed Western governments and human rights watchdogs.

Robredo is the second key official to resign from Duterte's administration in less than a week. Maria Serena Diokno resigned as head of the government's historical commission Tuesday to protest Duterte's decision to allow Marcos' burial in the hallowed cemetery.

Diokno has since joined street protests by anti-Marcos groups condemning the Nov. 18 burial, which was secretly carried out while left-wing petitioners were preparing to appeal a Supreme Court ruling that upheld the president's decision to authorize the entombment.

Robredo cited her opposition to the burial, the drug killings, Duterte's plan to reimpose the death penalty and "sexual attacks against women" among the issues on which she differed with Duterte, who took office on June 30.

AP

In this June 30, 2016 file photo, Philippine Vice President Leni Robredo is sworn in during inauguration ceremonies in suburban Quezon city, north of Manila, Philippines.

The last straw, she said, was when she was notified Saturday by Cabinet Secretary Leoncio Evasco Jr. through a cellphone message about the president's order for Robredo "to desist from attending all Cabinet meetings" starting Monday.

Evasco said Duterte decided to bar her from Cabinet meetings because of her "irreconcilable differences" with the Duterte administration.

Duterte's move, Robredo said, made it impossible for her to do her work.

The vice president said the budget for government agencies dealing with housing has been significantly slashed, her recommended appointments have not been acted on and an executive order aiming to make her agency, the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, effective has not been signed.

Robredo, 52, did not provide details about the alleged plot to remove her from the vice presidency, but her electoral victory has been questioned by her closest rival in the race, former Sen. Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr., the son of the late dictator.

Marcos Jr. lost by a slim margin to Robredo, the widow of a popular politician who built a name as an honest, hands-on provincial mayor who wore slippers to work and reached out to the poor in the countryside.

Robredo's husband died in a plane crash in 2012 and she later acceded to widespread calls for her to enter politics.

Robredo said she has chosen to ignore warnings "of a plot to steal the vice presidency" and instead tried to focus on her work.

"But the events of recent days indicate that this plot is now being set into motion," Robredo said, adding that she will continue to support the positive actions of Duterte's administration "and oppose those that are inimical to the people's interest."

Indonesians rally for tolerance after blasphemy protests

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—Tens of thousands of Indonesians rallied in the center of the capital Jakarta on Sunday, calling for tolerance and unity after massive protests by conservative Muslims against the city's minority Christian governor

The crowds filled a major traffic circle in the heart of the city and sprawled into its main thoroughfares.

The demonstrators waved "We Are Indonesia" signs and a giant red-and-white national flag was held aloft by hundreds of people.

The capital of Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation, has been rocked in the past month by two major protests against Gov. Basuki "Ahok" Tjahaja Purnama, who is being prosecuted for alleged blasphemy. The movement against Ahok, who is the first ethnic Chinese to be governor of Jakarta and the first Christian in half a century, has raised communal tensions and challenged Indonesia's reputation for practicing a moderate brand of Islam.

A demonstration against Ahok on Friday drew at least 200,000 people. An anti-Ahok protest on Nov. 4 attracted at least 100,000 people and turned violent, with one dead and dozens of protesters and police injured.

Hard-line Muslim groups are demanding Ahok's immediate arrest. Police say his detention is not necessary and have called for the legal process to be respected.

Sunday's rally coincided with a weekly car-free morning in Jakarta when a central artery of the city is handed over to pedestrians for a few hours.

Police estimated 30,000 people turned up, said Jakarta police spokesman Argo Yuwono.

Organizers called it the "Parade of Indonesian Culture" and it featured traditional dances from Sabang in westernmost Aceh to Merauke in easternmost Papua.

National leaders of political parties under the pro-government coalition behind President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo, an ally of Ahok, delivered short speeches on the importance of keeping the ethnically diverse nation united.

"We have to fight to materialize the aims of our independence. That will not happen if we are scattered, blaspheming, humiliating each other and no longer trust each other," Surya Paloh, chairman of the National Democratic Party, said from the main stage.

"Our main enemies are stupidity and poverty. Therefore we ask the current government to work harder and always consistently with the people's aspirations," Paloh said.

Blasphemy is a criminal offense in Indonesia and punishable by up to five years in prison.

Chef credited with inventing General Tso's Chicken has died

NEW YORK (AP)—The chef credited with inventing General Tso's Chicken, a world-famous Chinese dish smothered in a sweet sauce that was never a staple in China, has died in Taiwan at 98.

Peng Chang-kuei died of pneumonia last Wednesday in Taipei, his son, Chuck Peng, told The Associated Press. He was still cooking in the family's Taipei restaurant kitchen just a few months ago.

Peng first brought the sticky, sweet and spicy dish to New York about 40 years ago.

It's now on Chinese restaurant menus across the United States, exploding in popularity after President Nixon visited China in 1972. The dish also reportedly became a favorite of famed statesman Henry Kissinger, who with Nixon helped open the communist country to the West, spotlighting its culture and food.

But General Tso's chicken was never part of the Chinese culinary tradition.

The chef created the dish in the 1950s in Taiwan, where he fled in 1949 with Chiang Kai-shek after the communists took over, said Chuck Peng, speaking from his home in Taipei.

In Taiwan, the chef helped welcome the commander of the U.S. Navy's 7th Fleet in the Pacific with a banquet that included the new culinary creation named after a 19th-century Chinese military leader from Peng's native Hunan Province.

By the 1970s, he was in New York running a restaurant named after himself near the United Nations on Manhattan's East Side. Kissinger was a frequent guest, said Chuck Peng.

"General Tso's Chicken is so famous because of Henry Kissinger, because he was among the first to eat it, and he liked it, so others followed," said Peng.

Americans quickly took to what is now a mound of deep-fried chunks of floured chicken, smothered in sweetness that usually includes soy sauce, sugar, ginger and other spices.

In the dish's first incarnation, the chicken reportedly was not fried, and its unsweetened flavor came from garlic, soy sauce and chilis.

The story of the delicacy is told in a 2014 documentary called "The Search for General Tso," which traces the roots of Chinese food in America through the iconic dish.

"The march of General Tso's chicken has been long and wide," said Jennifer 8. Lee, author of "The Fortune Cookie Chronicles." ''It's the most popular of Chinese dishes in America, because it is sweet, fried and chicken—all things Americans love. It is easily a billion dollar industry in and of itself."

ASIAN BRIEFS

Beijing faces decision on how to respond to Trump's tweets

BEIJING (AP)—With Donald Trump's latest tweets touching on sensitive issues, China must decide how to handle an incoming American president who relishes confrontation and whose online statements appear to foreshadow shifts in foreign policy. China awoke Monday to criticism from Trump on Twitter, days after it responded to his telephone conversation with Taiwan's president by accusing the Taiwanese of playing a "little trick" on Trump. Trump wrote, "Did China ask us if it was OK to devalue their currency (making it hard for our companies to compete, heavily tax our products going into their country (the U.S. doesn't tax them) or to build a massive military complex in the middle of the South China Sea? I don't think so!" That was apparently prompted by China's response to Trump's Tsai Ing-wen talks.

Trump's call inspires hope in Taiwan, concern in Beijing

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—Donald Trump's 10-minute phone call with Taiwan's president has raised the hopes of some Taiwanese that the United States will work more forcefully with the island. But the U.S. president-elect also inflamed the complex relationships between America, China and Taiwan, which China regards as a renegade province. Whether the U.S. president-elect meant to jump into the generational fight between China and Taiwan remains an open question. But by speaking to Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen, Trump upended four decades of American foreign policy and engaged China directly on the issue of Taiwan, which Beijing has threatened to reclaim by force if necessary. One former American official in Taiwan says he thinks China is waiting to see what Trump does next before responding.

World

Chaos erupts as Iraq delivers aid to Mosul

MOSUL, Iraq (AP)—Chaos erupted in eastern Mosul on Sunday when hundreds of civilians overwhelmed aid trucks distributing food and water.

The Iraqi government has called on Mosul's residents to stay in their homes during the operation to retake the city from the Islamic State group, hoping to avoid large-scale displacement, but as progress on the ground slows, hundreds of thousands are now stuck with dwindling food and water supplies.

The Iraqi government sent truckloads of food, heating oil and drinking water to residents in areas retaken from IS on Sunday, but few of the trucks could make it to civilians trapped near front-line fighting.

"There is no justice," Abu Ahmed said during a chaotic distribution in the Samah neighborhood on the eastern edge of Mosul. "Some people took so many bags of food and others got nothing." He asked that his full name not be used out of security concerns.

While the trucks bore banners identifying them as distributing aid on behalf of the local government, there were no government or security officials present in Samah during the melee that ensued.

Men, women and children fought over bags of flour and baskets of apples.

AP

Civilians flee their home as Iraqi security forces fight Islamic State militants on the front line, in the Shaimaa neighborhood of Mosul, Iraq, Sunday, Dec. 4, 2016.

"We are desperate, this is the first time I've seen aid trucks," Abu Ahmed said. He said the food and water residents had stockpiled before the start of the operation had run out.

At one point, Iraqi soldiers fired into the air in an attempt to clear the street to make way for ambulances carrying casualties from the front.

Younis Shamal, a teenager from Mosul, watched crowds fighting over food and water scatter from the far side of the road. "Our lives used to be very normal, we would just go to work and come home at the end of the day," he said, "this has turned us into uncivilized people."

More than six weeks in, the battle for Mosul is proceeding slowly, with Iraqi forces battling street by street against heavily armed militants who have launched scores of suicide car bomb attacks.

In the Shaimaa neighborhood, soldiers and IS fighters exchanged heavy gunfire from rooftops as Iraqi forces tried to advance down narrow residential streets. IS militants shelled the district with a heavy barrage of mortar rounds, according to AP reporters at the scene.

Diaa Sallal, a senior Iraqi relief official, told The Associated Press that the supplies were being delivered to the towns of Bartella and Qayara, near Mosul, as well as two outlying Mosul neighborhoods. Sallal, reached by telephone in Iraq's northern Kurdish region, gave no further details.

Scores of families continue to brave ongoing fighting to flee IS-held districts for the relative safety of neighborhoods retaken by government troops or camps for the displaced outside the city.

Deeper inside Mosul, Iraqi special forces set up a tight security perimeter around a more organized aid distribution in the Bakr neighborhood. Hundreds of men and women lined up along a residential street as Iraqi special forces handed out boxes of aid.

But with the front line just over a hundred meters (yards) away, only a small number of aid trucks could reach the neighborhood.

Soldiers screened the civilians as gunfire echoed nearby. Ambulances and armored vehicles carrying wounded soldiers came screaming past after an IS suicide car bomb struck a nearby army position.

Elsewhere in Iraq, security forces in the northern Kurdish region shot and killed two of four people who resisted arrest in a village near the Iranian border. Nasah Mala Hassan, the mayor of a nearby town, said the other two blew themselves up, and that an armed Kurdish civilian was killed. It was not immediately clear whether the suspects were members of an armed group.

Russian patriarch blesses new Paris church, a Putin project

PARIS (AP)—The patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church consecrated a prominent new church Sunday near the Eiffel Tower seen as a controversial symbol of Russian President Vladimir Putin's influence in Europe.

Patriarch Kirill, a close ally of Putin, led the elaborate sanctifying ceremony in the Saint Trinity Church on the banks of the Seine River, the gold-domed centerpiece of a 100 million euro ($106 million) complex owned by the Russian government that will include a cultural center and a school.

The hours-long ceremony included the consecration of the altar, a procession around the grounds and the placing of relics, accompanied by an all-male choir and the rich smells of incense.

The Paris mayor, Russian model Natalia Vodianova, Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev's wife Svetlana and members of France's large Russian community crowded into the invitation-only, high-security event in the imposing, block-shaped white church.

While it was primarily a religious event, it carried strong political overtones.

The staunchly conservative Kirill came to Paris' Left Bank as Europe faces a populist push against multicultural liberalism in favor of the kind of tougher, more traditional politics that Putin and the Russian Orthodox Church eschew. And his visit comes as some leading French and other European politicians argue for better relations with Russia after years of diplomatic tensions over Moscow's role in the conflicts in Syria and Ukraine.

Churchgoer Ekaterina Besse, a Russian living in Paris, welcomed the new church complex and expressed hope for a "thaw" in relations.

"We can see this is also a political gesture as much as a religious one," she said.

Putin championed the project for a new Russian church in Paris, which prompted criticism from rights groups when it was first approved in 2008, and new concerns as diplomatic relations soured in ensuing years. Putin played down suspicions that it would be used by Russian secret services to spy on sensitive government buildings and embassies in the surrounding neighborhood.

The Russian state-owned church on a prominent piece of Parisian real estate is also an awkward symbol for secular France, which adheres firmly to its division between church and state.

In Russia—until 25 years ago an officially atheist state—the role of the church has grown under Putin, notably in its lobbying for traditional family policies and against homosexuality. Putin, who once explained the 2014 annexation of the Crimean Peninsula from Ukraine by noting that the prince of the ancient Kievan Russian state was baptized there more than 1,000 years ago, has publicly supported conservative Christian groups, arguing that Western liberal values are alien to Russians.

Netanyahu says Trump election has not changed 2-state goal

JERUSALEM (AP)—Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says his support for a two-state solution with the Palestinians remains the same after Donald Trump's victory in the U.S. presidential election.

Trump's election has encouraged Israeli hardliners to call on Netanyahu to step up Israeli settlement construction, annex parts of the occupied West Bank or even abandon the idea of Palestinian independence.

But in a satellite interview to the Saban Forum at the Brookings Institution in Washington on Sunday, Netanyahu said his position on "two states for two peoples" hasn't changed.

The international community widely supports a two-state solution. Trump has not yet laid out his Mideast policy.

The Palestinians have accused Netanyahu of undermining two-state hopes by building settlements. Netanyahu said the Palestinians must recognize Israel as the homeland of the Jews.

Syrian army tells rebels in Aleppo to leave or die

ALEPPO, Syria (AP)—The Syrian army on Sunday ordered rebels in Aleppo to leave the city or face "inevitable death," as a series of airstrikes on the neighboring Idlib province killed at least 50 people, including several children.

Aleppo shook from the sound of explosions throughout the day as pro-government forces, including foreign fighters dispatched from Lebanon, Iraq, and Iran, pounded the city's opposition neighborhoods in the east.

Rebel defenses have buckled after months of siege and waves of devastating airstrikes, and the opposition could soon be driven from Syria's largest city.

It would mark their biggest defeat since 2011, when a government crackdown against dissent sparked a civil war. Rebels swept into Aleppo in 2012. The government's fortunes changed after the Russian air force intervened in September 2015, allowing the government to begin to reconquer it.

Army spokesman Brig. Gen. Samir Suleiman told The Associated Press in Aleppo that government forces would "continue fighting until they restore stability and security to all neighborhoods." He said the army has already retaken more than half the neighborhoods in eastern Aleppo, and that special forces would lead the battle in the narrow streets of the city's historic district.

On Sunday, the government captured large swathes of the Qaterji, Maysar, and Karm al-Turab neighborhoods, bringing their eastern flank to within less than a kilometer (half a mile) from the citadel that anchors the center of the city. The citadel has remained under government control throughout the conflict.

The advance also threatens to split the rebels' rump enclave in two and isolate the once densely populated al-Shaar neighborhood.

Judy al-Halaby, an activist still in the city, said residents began evacuating the area five days ago, with thousands fleeing to government control and thousands others deeper into rebel territory.

The U.N. estimates that more than 31,000 people have fled their homes since pro-government forces began advancing inside east Aleppo one week ago.

In the Hanano district, which was captured by government forces on Nov. 26, hundreds of people were seen returning to their homes, as minivans passed through carrying troops and militiamen to the front lines.

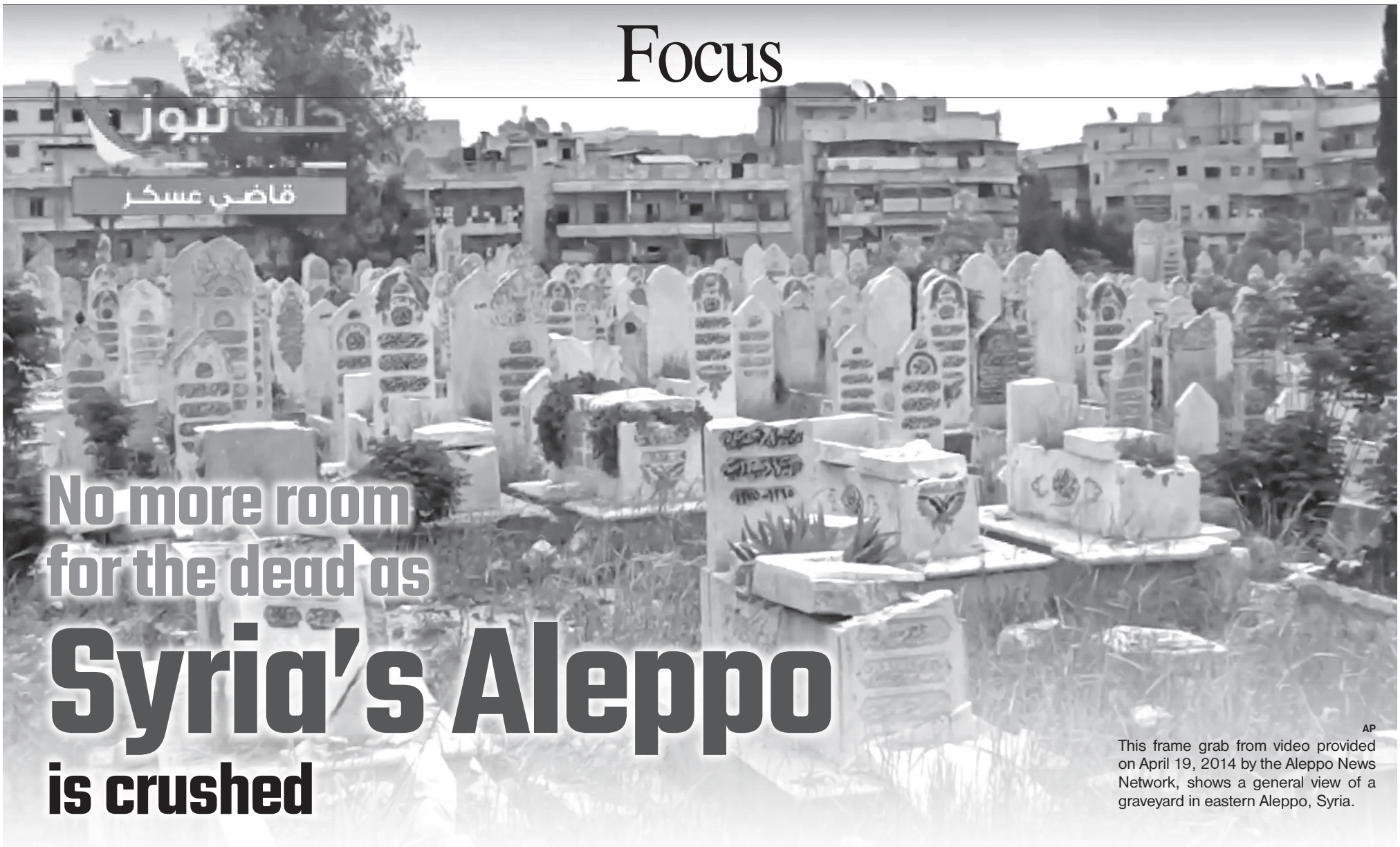
For some of the residents, it was their first time seeing their homes in years.

Mohammed Qadra, 58, who left the district four years ago, returned from the government-held western part of the city on Sunday to discover that his home was so badly damaged that it is impossible for him to return.

"I have no money to renovate it now but I will do so step by step," said the man, who said he cried once he saw his home.

Russian or government jets, meanwhile, were thought to be behind several raids on the Idlib province on Sunday, including two that struck rural markets and killed dozens of people, activists said.

Focus



AP
This frame grab from video provided on April 19, 2014 by the Aleppo News Network, shows a general view of a graveyard in eastern Aleppo, Syria.

No more room for the dead as Syria's Aleppo is crushed

SARAH EL DEEB
ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEIRUT (AP)—The old Aleppo cemetery filled up a year ago. The new one filled up last week. Now the dead are left in the besieged enclave's streets, buried in backyards and overwhelming the morgues.

Medical officials secured yet another plot for the dead. But they say they have no way to dig graves with government troops now crashing into opposition-held eastern Aleppo, shelling civilians as they flee and forcing thousands to squeeze into a chaotic, devastated and shrinking pocket of neighborhoods.

"We have no more room," said Mohammed Abu Jaafar, the head of the local forensic authority. His department is so overwhelmed, the staff registering the dead pleaded with him not to take any more bodies.

"Even if I were to consider mass burials, I don't have the machines to do the digging," he said in a telephone interview.

Dignity in death has been lost as the rebel-held enclave that has held out for four years collapses.

For two weeks, government forces bombarded the area, killing more than 310 civilians, including 42 children, and up to 220 opposition fighters, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. Then last weekend, ground troops stormed into the 17-square-mile (45 square kilometer) enclave, captured half of it and advanced on the rest.

U.N Emergency Relief Coordinator Stephen O'Brien pleaded Wednesday for access to eastern Aleppo, home to some 275,000, "before it becomes one giant graveyard."

In some ways, it already has. Bodies have been left to rot on the streets. Ambulances and rescue vehicles can't reach them because they have been targeted or because fuel has run out. As troops close in, there are now more, multiple front lines all too dangerous to approach.

Residents of a southern neighborhood close to a government advance only learned that a body was lying in the ditches when a cat started eating at the corpse.

"A woman from the neighborhood came and reported it to the morgue. We still don't know who the corpse belongs to," Abu Jaafar said, holding his breath. "I swear to God I cried. And I am one who is used to horrific scenes."

With eastern Aleppo under a tight siege since July, supplies and food are running out.

Just before the ground offensive, government airstrikes knocked out all seven medical facilities in the enclave, including five equipped with trauma and intensive care units. With the government advances, the medical complex where four of the hospitals are located is now only a few hundred yards (meters) from conquering troops.

The hospitals were evacuated. The doctors scattered around the strip, setting up small underground medical points to avoid detection but able to give only the simplest basics of care.

"Every wounded is a potential martyr," said Zakaria Amino, the deputy head of the eastern Aleppo Local Council.

A nurse who works in one underground clinic said some wounded have died as they waited for medical attention, and because of a shortage of blood. The enclave's blood bank was hit and shut down. Even worse, some after surgery could not survive the cold weather, she said.

When government forces and their allies took the northern part of the enclave, over 30,000 people fled into government and Kurdish-controlled parts of the city. Thousands more fled into the remaining rebel-held southern districts, already overwhelmed and running short on all supplies.

On the road fleeing, at least 50 people were killed in government bombings in the last few days. Images of their bodies lying on the ground amid the debris and their packed bags were a reminder of the cruel nature of the conflict, now in its sixth year.

"There are wounded people everywhere. I am afraid I will step on them as I walk," said Abu Jaafar.

And while the makeshift medical points are overwhelmed and understaffed, they also don't know where to bury the dead.

Abu Jaafar said they are afraid the piled bodies would expose the clinics' secret locations. "There are informants and collaborators with the regime everywhere," he said.

In the past four years, more than 20,000 residents of Aleppo province have been killed, more than 80 percent of them in rebel-held areas, according to the Britain-based Observatory, which has kept a record of casualties.

The eastern districts' old cemetery was full even before rebels took over the area in 2012. But it was still used amid the heavy fighting and government bombardment as officials looked for another piece of land. They found another last year, but now that one, which was bombed this summer, and two smaller ones are full.

But since the war intensified, residents of east Aleppo have had to resort to whatever is closest to honor their dead.

"We have buried our dead in our gardens for a while," said Amino, of the council. When possible, he said people take their dead to the Tababa, or the health authority run by Abu Jaafar that operates the morgue and issues deaths certificates.

Documentation is nearly impossible when the whole population is in flux. Since Saturday, 20 bodies lie in his morgue unidentified after the shelling of people fleeing the ground advances. Another 70 bodies remain unidentified from the airstrikes that preceded the ground assault.

Abu Jaafar posted a picture of a 5-month-old girl found under the rubble somewhere in Aleppo two days ago. Her parents are believed dead, and the little girl lost a leg. She is now in the care of the nurses in one of the underground clinics.

"With ambulances overwhelmed and many of them out of order, people are acting as rescuers," Abu Jaafar said.

All the bodies are believed to be civilians. The fighters bury their dead independently.

With no respect in death, Abu Jaafar said surviving in collapsing Aleppo may be even worse.

A former regime loyalist who defected to the opposition, he said he fears the government may regain control of all of Aleppo.

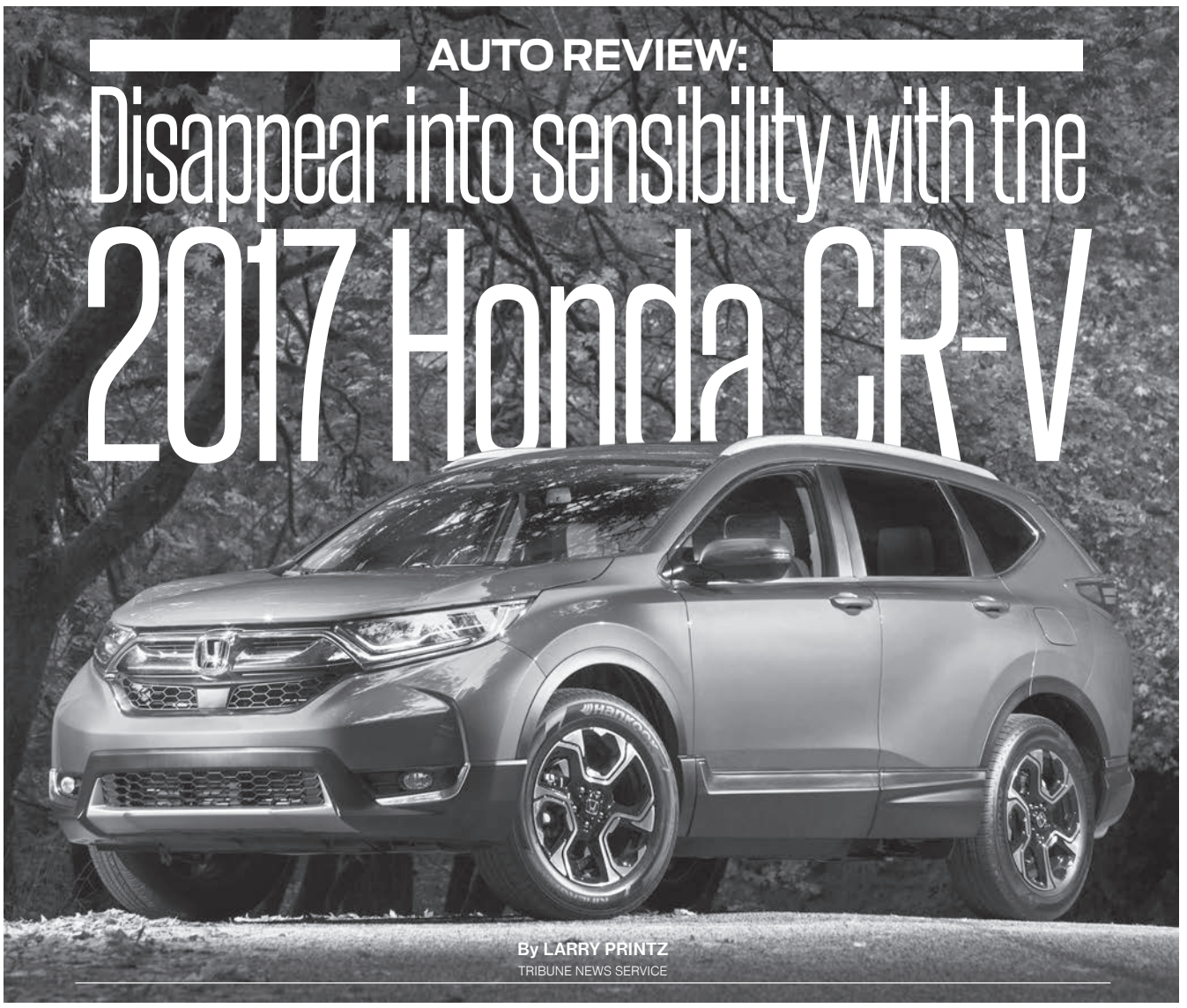
"It is easier for me to have my house collapse over my head and die than to hand myself over to this government."

AP
This frame grab from video provided on Oct. 17, 2016 by the Aleppo News Network, shows men carrying the bodies of dead children to be buried in a cemetery in eastern Aleppo city, Syria.

Overdrive

AUTO REVIEW:

Disappear into sensibility with the 2017 Honda CR-V



By LARRY PRINTZ
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

Honda says its CR-V, the best-selling SUV in the U.S., will come with an optional turbocharged engine that will get best-in-class fuel economy. TNS

Have you ever done something so reprehensible you'd rather not talk about it?

After it happened, did you want to be noticed? Of course you didn't. Suddenly, becoming a member of the federal witness protection program seemed like a good idea.

Disappearing, though, doesn't have to involve meeting with agents or moving to Arizona.

If you don't want to be seen, wear jeans and T-shirt. And while you're at it, leave that sports car or luxury vehicle at home and opt for the 2017 Honda CR-V instead. No one will look at you twice — unless they want to surmise how sensible you are.

You might not believe it, especially in the aftermath of the recent election, but most Americans are fairly sensible. If you need proof, consider that last year, more than 300,000 sensible sorts opted for a Honda CR-V rather than, say, a Mazda Miata. In fact, it's among America's best-selling SUVs, with Honda having sold nearly 4 million over the past two decades. So buying the redesigned CR-V won't raise any suspicions, although it might raise a few envious eyebrows.

Why? Simple: The new CR-V addresses the previous model's rear seat, which seemed tight for those of us past puberty. Climb in the back of the 2017 CR-V, and you'll find it's 1.2 inches longer and 1.4 inches wider than the previous model. There's enough space to sit behind yourself without your knees touching the front seats. Fold down the rear seat and you'll find more than 5 feet of flat cargo space ready for any manner of lifestyle debris. And check out the cargo floor; its height is adjustable. How sensible.

Up front, you'll discover that the driver's seat is the best seat in the house. It's far more accommodating than the flat-front passenger seat and its widely placed side bolsters, whose position is too low and has a cushion that doesn't tilt or adjust for height, even on the top trim level. So while you can adjust the cargo floor height so that your groceries can ride comfortably, you can't do that for a front seat passenger.

But that's a minor quibble on a car that's eminently sensible.

Consider safety. Twenty years ago, when the CR-V debuted, just having air bags was noteworthy. Today, that honor falls to Honda Sensing, a suite of electronic safety aids that are standard on all models except for the LX, which is clearly the model to choose if you're unthinking. After all, why wouldn't you want collision mitigation braking, road departure mitigation, adaptive cruise control or lane keeping assist? All models get blind spot information and a driver attention monitor that detects if it's time for you to take a break from behind the wheel.

Even if it is, though, there's no doubt your judgmental spouse told you long before the car did.

The new CR-V comes with one of two engines. For the careless, there's the LX, which get last year's 2.4-liter four-cylinder rated at 184 horsepower and 180 foot-pounds of torque. The rest of us will opt for the EX, EX-L, and Touring models with a new 1.5-liter double-overhead cam turbocharged four rated at 190 horsepower and 179 foot-pounds of torque. As before, both front- and all-wheel-drive models are available.

While the engine generates more power than it does in the Civic, one wonders what this vehicle would be like when fully loaded with people and stuff. There's sufficient muscle to get the job done, and requests for more power are promptly answered. Nevertheless, the continuously variable automatic transmission occasionally hangs up in a ratio when you need it to change gears.

This is unfortunate, as the 2017 CR-V is a big improvement dynamically over its predecessor.

It's clearly more fun to drive than others of this ilk, with a ride that's never punishing with little of the body motions you'd expect in exchange. Steering is nicely weighted and quick, with better-than-expected road feel considering its electric power steering. It's nimble, although you won't confuse it with a sports sedan. Besides, the CR-V is all about sensibility, which is why it returns 34 mpg in highway driving, according to the EPA.

So don't tell anyone that electronics, not a cable, connect the accelerator pedal to the engine. Sensibly, it reduces weight and allows for quicker steering response.

That said, there's a fair amount of road noise, and the audio system's sound quality proved disappointing; not only for sound quality, but in ability to mask the noise. On the bright side, it does have a volume knob, something conspicuously absent from recent Hondas.

Aesthetically, the exterior wears a familiar look, albeit with more sophisticated details. And the interior is significantly more pleasant, with materials that impart a more luxurious feel, even if some details are deceptively so.

Dynamically and aesthetically, the 2017 CR-V is a noticeable improvement. But when you take into consideration its roomier cabin, it makes for a sensibly upgraded package that's hard for any sensible person to resist.

NUTS & BOLTS

- **Base prices:** $24,045
- **Engine:** Turbocharged 1.5-liter four-cylinder
- **Horsepower:** 190
- **Torque:** 179 pound-feet
- **Fuel type:** Regular
- **EPA fuel economy (city/highway):** 27-28 mpg/33-24 mpg
- **Wheelbase:** 104.7 inches
- **Length:** 180.6 inches
- **Cargo capacity:** 39.2-75.8 cubic feet
- **Curb weight:** 3,307-3,512 pounds
- **NHTSA rating:** Not rated

Under the Hood: Understanding tire specifications

By BRAD BERGHOLDT
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

Q I need to buy new tires for my 2013 Honda Accord. Because one of my current tires is relatively new, I'm hoping to buy just three. The one I'd like to hang on to is an offbeat, kind of expensive brand that I purchased in a rush after running something over. So, is OK for me to buy three normal, standard-brand tires that don't match it when I do my replacement?

Becky B.

A It's best to have four identical tires. However, if the new tires you purchase match the single tire's specifications and have a similar tread pattern, they'll do the job just fine.

While you're checking things out, be sure to see if the single tire meets or exceeds your vehicle's specifications. Accord service information specifies replacement tires should be 205/65R16 with a service description of 95H or better.

That first number, 205, refers to the section width (side wall to side wall) as measured in millimeters. The second number, 65, is the aspect ratio, in this case meaning the tire is 65 percent as tall as it is wide. The third number, 16, is the wheel diameter in inches. Finally, 95H refers to the load index and speed rating. In this case, 95 means the tire is rated to carry 1,521 pounds. A higher number here would indicate a higher load capacity. Meanwhile, the H means the tire's speed rating is 130 mph. Letters that come later in the alphabet—with the exception of V, W, Y and Z—would indicate a lower speed rating. Watch out for this one!

Since your single tire likely has a bit less tread depth than the new tires will have, it'd be best to mount it on the rear of your front-wheel-drive Accord. Tires of differing tread depth and diameter cause undue stress and wear on a vehicle's driveline components. This is a big deal on all-wheel-drive vehicles.

Q What's your take on the 3,000-mile oil change my local oil changing place recommends?

Louie B.

A I think it's wrong to promote a one-size-fits-all oil change interval without taking into account how a vehicle is driven. A majority of modern cars and trucks employ a maintenance reminder or oil life system that considers many factors when indicating how many miles you can drive before getting the vehicle serviced again. Ambient temperature, average speed, run times, load and other factors are crunched by the system, resulting in a recommendation that could be much more generous than your local shop's standard. General Motors says the average recommended interval on its vehicles is 8,500 miles.

On a vehicle without a maintenance reminder that's driven mostly for short trips, an oil change every 3,000 to 5,000 miles isn't a bad idea, as sludge can build up under such conditions and cause problems. If the vehicle is usually driven on the highway for trips of at least 30 minutes, changing the oil every 6,000 to 8,000 miles or once a year—whichever comes first—is reasonable.

Also, synthetic oil holds up a lot better than dinosaur oil but it still gets dirty.

Brad Bergholdt is an automotive technology instructor at Evergreen Valley College in San Jose, Calif. Readers may send him email at under-the-hood(at)earthlink.net; he cannot make personal replies.

Life & Style

Designers mixed on dressing former model Melania Trump

First lady-to-be Melania Trump likely won't be wearing designer Tom Ford's clothes in the White House.

Some of the designers who clamored to dress first lady Michelle Obama have been mixed about dressing Mrs. Trump, a former model. Ford became the latest to weigh in on the matter during an appearance this week on "The View."

The designer was asked to dress Melania Trump "quite a few years ago:" and declined because "she's not necessarily my image," he said on the ABC chat show Wednesday.

Ford is a Democrat and voted for Hillary Clinton in the presidential election, he said, before adding that even if Clinton had won, she shouldn't have worn his clothes because "they're too expensive." His clothes cost a lot to make and the president needs to "relate to everybody," he explained.

Asked if Melania Trump should wear expensive clothes, Ford replied: "I'm going to leave that to Melania."

Ford was willing to dress first lady Michelle Obama for a London visit with Queen Elizabeth II in 2011 and isn't the first to be less enthusiastic about outfitting Mrs. Trump.

Sophie Theallat, whose designs have been worn by Mrs. Obama on several occasions, wrote in an open letter last month that she would not dress Mrs. Trump specifically brought up politics in urging her colleagues to take the same tact.

"The rhetoric of racism, sexism, and xenophobia unleashed by her husband's presidential campaign are incompatible with the shared values we live by," Theallat wrote.

The letter prompted Women's Wear Daily , which covers the fashion industry, to survey other prominent designers on the question of working with Mrs. Trump, who began modeling in Paris and Milan at age 16 before settling in New York 20 years ago.

In this Nov. 17, 2016, file photo, fashion designer, writer and director Tom Ford attends the premiere of «Nocturnal Animals» in New York. AP

While Marc Jacobs said that he has "no interest whatsoever" in dressing Mrs. Trump, Tommy Hilfiger told the trade magazine he was willing, calling her "a beautiful woman who would make any designer's clothes look great."

Cynthia Rowley told WWD the question was "somewhat irrelevant," since Mrs. Trump can simply buy whatever she wants to wear.

"Checking someone's ethical beliefs before they're allowed to purchase, sets up an exclusionary dynamic that feeds into the exact mentality that is preventing us from moving forward in a positive direction," Rowley said. ***(AP)***

No more 'Melania Trump' underwear or honey for Slovenians

LJUBLJANA, Slovenia (AP)—No more Melania Trump honey, cakes, shoes and underwear for Slovenians.

The future U.S. first lady has hired a law firm in her native country to protect her name and image from being used on numerous products that have sprung up since her husband, Donald Trump, was elected president.

Natasa Pirc Musar, director of the Pirc Musar&Partnerji law firm, said Friday that the use of the name "Melania Trump" for commercial purposes without approval of her client would be against the law in the small Alpine state and would represent a violation of personal rights.

"Judicial practice in Slovenia is clear: the use of the name, surname and photo of someone for commercial purposes without approval is not allowed," Pirc Musar told The Associated Press, adding that the law firm has sent a press release to all Slovenian media, warning of a possible violation of the Melania Trump registered trademark.

In this July 18, 2016, file photo, Melania Trump, wife of Republican Presidential Candidate Donald Trump walks to the stage as Donald Trump introduces her during the opening day of the Republican National Convention in Cleveland. AP

Items that were named after her include honey jars with labels showing her smiling face and the inscription "from the home garden of Melania Trump," cakes decorated with golden dust, high heel shoes, an underwear line, a type of salad and even a big Christmas tree in the capital.

Pirc Musar said that Melania Trump so far has not launched any legal claims.

"We issued only a general warning," Pirc Musar said. "We did not decide to call anybody or to demand anything. We have nothing against the Christmas tree in Ljubljana named Melania because this has nothing to do with commercial purposes. But we can't allow some products to be named 'Melania Trump.'"

Born Melanija Knavs, Melania Trump left Slovenia in her 20s to pursue an international modeling career. The last time she is believed to have visited her native country was in July 2002, when she introduced Donald Trump to her parents at the lakeside Grand Hotel Toplice in the resort town of Bled two years before the couple's engagement.

It is not clear whether the branding of some products only as "Melania" would also represent the trademark breach.

Jewish family battles Spain museum over art looted by Nazis

LOS ANGELES (AP)—In the epic, 16-year battle over a priceless painting looted by the Nazis, there is one point on which all sides agree: When Lilly Cassirer and her husband fled Germany ahead of the Holocaust, they surrendered their Camille Pissarro masterpiece in exchange for their lives.

The Jewish couple traded the work for the exit visas that allowed them to flee to the safety of England in 1939. When they did so, they set Pissarro's stunning 1897 oil-on-canvas Paris street scene on an incredible journey of its own.

It was an odyssey that would take "Rue St.-Honore, Apres-Midi, Effet de Pluie" from Germany to the United States, through the hands of several wealthy collectors and prominent art dealers and, finally, to Spain's Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum, where it has resided since 1993.

Since 2000, Lilly Cassirer's heirs have been trying to get it back.

They may get one of their last best chances Monday when their lawyer, David Boies, argues before a federal appeals court that under state law and international treaties, the painting appraised at more than $30 million belongs to Cassirer's great-grandchildren.

"This is an issue that is critically important not only in terms of trying to right terrible wrongs that had their origin in the Nazi persecution of the Jews but also to establish principles that are very important to what's happening now in the world," Boies said earlier this week.

"Month after month, you see reports of ISIS looting art in Muslim countries and selling it to raise money," he continued. Allowing Spain to keep the painting, he said, would tell the world that buying looted art has no consequences.

The museum's attorney, Thaddeus J. Stauber, argues the issue is no longer about looted art but simply well-documented ownership rights to a painting purchased in good faith.

What's more, Stauber says, Cassirer forfeited her ownership rights when she accepted $13,000 from the German government in 1958 for the painting's loss.

'Last Tango in Paris' rape scene revelation sparks outrage

LOS ANGELES (AP)—"Last Tango in Paris" is making headlines again 44 years after the controversial film came out. A recently unearthed video interview with Italian director Bernardo Bertolucci from 2013 has renewed interest, and outrage, over what happened to actress Maria Schneider on set during the infamous butter rape scene.

Bertolucci said that neither he nor Marlon Brando told Schneider of their plans to use the stick of butter during the simulated rape scene—a concept they came up with the morning of the shoot—because he wanted her to react "as a girl not as an actress." He wanted her, he said, to feel "the rage and the humiliation."

Schneider, who died in 2011 at age 58 after a lengthy illness, spoke a number of times about the scene between her, then aged 19, and Marlon Brando, then 48, even saying in a 2007 Daily Mail interview that she "felt a little raped" by her co-star and director.

"They only told me about it before we had to film the scene, and I was so angry," Schneider said. "I should have called my agent or had my lawyer come to the set because you can't force someone to do something that isn't in the script. But at the time, I didn't know that."

But despite Schneider's past comments, the video interview with Bertolucci struck a chord this weekend as it circulated on social media that the director was admitting that the scene was non-consensual.

Actress Jessica Chastain wrote on Twitter that she felt "sick" over the revelation that "the director planned her attack."

Filmmaker Ava DuVernay called it "inexcusable."

"As a director, I can barely fathom this. As a woman, I am horrified, disgusted and enraged by it," DuVernay wrote.

Chris Evans also expressed his rage and said it was "beyond disgusting," while Anna Kendrick weighed in that she "used to get eye-rolls" when she brought the incident up to people previously and that she was "glad at least it will be taken seriously now."

Some, like actress Jenna Fischer, took a more extreme stance, writing that "all copies of this film should be destroyed immediately."

Schneider, a relative unknown when she was cast in the film, said that the "whole circus" of suddenly being famous made her turn to drugs and she even attempted suicide a few times. She stayed friends with Brando until his death in 2004, but she said that "for a while we couldn't talk about the movie."

Chanel: Train across flower fields threatens No. 5 perfume

PARIS (AP)—Chanel warned Friday that a planned train line through the prized flower fields near the southern French perfume-making area of Grasse will threaten the production of its famous Chanel No. 5 scent.

France's SNCF rail network plans to build a controversial new high-speed route—and viaduct—to ease traffic congestion between Le Muy and Cannes along the busy French Riviera, one of Europe's most visited areas.

In a statement, SNCF said the region is home to three of France's biggest cities and simply "cannot afford to remain isolated in an increasingly interconnected European area."

But the perfume maker is causing a stink.

Chanel issued a statement Friday arguing that the train plans would comprise the production of their best-known scents.

"The construction of a viaduct and the regular passage of high-speed trains above the flower fields would force Chanel to stop supporting its artisanal activities in the region," the statement read, referring to Grasse, one of the world's most famous perfume-making sites.

Chanel No. 5—created in 1921 and made world-famous by blond bombshell Marilyn Monroe—relies on extracts of "Grasse" jasmine and May rose that are cultivated in and around Grasse. The scent is said to have remained unchanged for decades.

Chanel has been supporting a campaign to put Grasse's perfume-making area on UNESCO's protected heritage list, and it successfully lobbied in 2009 to end a project to create a refuse center near the flower gardens in Pegomas and the Siagne Valley.

The luxury fashion house is lobbying French authorities to support an alternative route, using an old goods station in Cannes that's owned by the SNCF.

AP

In this May 2, 2005 file photo, bottles of Chanel No. 5 perfume are displayed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute exhibit in New York.

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Luke Bryan slaps heckler from stage with microphone in hand

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—Country star Luke Bryan took care of a heckler without skipping a beat during a concert this week by taking a swing at the man from the stage with his microphone still in hand. Bryan was performing his single "Move" at the Charlie Daniels' all-star Volunteer Jam in Nashville, Tennessee, on Wednesday when the outburst occurred. Fan video shows Bryan shouting, "Come on!" before stepping forward and slapping the man with his fingers while still holding onto the mic. Bryan then continued with the song while seemingly unfazed by the incident. Bryan's publicist says in a statement that the man was making "crude hand gestures" toward Bryan and that security personnel saw the man's "disruptive actions" and escorted him out.

Dutch return looted 2nd century marble head to Italy

ROME (AP)—Dutch police have returned to Italy a 2nd century marble head that was stolen from a famous archaeological site outside Rome and offered up for auction in Amsterdam. Italy's national police art squad says the 31-centimeter head of Roman empress Giulia Domna was worth 500,000 euros. It was stolen, apparently unnoticed, in 2012 from Villa Adriana at the Tivoli site, which is on UNESCO's world heritage list. Amsterdam police say two people were arrested and charged with theft and trying to sell the sculpture. Carabinieri Maj. Massimo Maresca said an Amsterdam auction house flagged the artifact to Italian authorities in 2015 after a woman purporting to be its owner tried to auction it off. Italian police notified their Dutch counterparts. Dutch authorities returned the head during a ceremony Friday in Amsterdam.

Swiss seize 9 relics allegedly stolen from Libya, Palmyra

GENEVA (AP)—The Geneva prosecutor's office has confiscated nine cultural artifacts including a sculpted head of Aphrodite and two bas-reliefs that were allegedly stolen from Yemen, Libya and the site of ancient Palmyra in Syria. The relics had been placed in the Geneva Free Ports, a special duty-free zone for storage, in 2009 and 2010, before the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings and the later emergence of the radical Islamic State group. The prosecutor's office said Friday that a customs check in 2013 raised suspicions that the relics had been stolen, prompting a look by cultural experts and later a criminal probe. It says the Aphrodite head from Libya dates from before the 1st century B.C. and the bas-reliefs were from before the 3rd century in Palmyra, a UNESCO World Heritage site later damaged by IS.

Shots fired, but at who? J. Cole's track has people guessing

NEW YORK (AP)—A track off J. Cole's forthcoming album has some people playing the guessing game on who he's taking shots at. Cole doesn't mention anyone by name on "False Prophets," but some on social media are speculating he's rapping about a few stars, including Kanye West. One verse goes: "Ego in charge of every move, he's a star/ And we can't look away due to the days that he caught our hearts." He also rhymes, "When he tell us he a genius but it's clearer lately/It's been hard for him to look into the mirror lately." Other lyrics allude to rappers who don't write their own lyrics and are quick to jump on new musical styles. Drake has been accused of not writing some of his own rhymes this year. Reps for Cole didn't immediately return requests for comment. "False Prophets" was released Friday and is included on Cole's "4 Your Eyez Only," which is set to drop Dec. 9.

Teyana Taylor advises Kanye on recovery: "Take your time"

NEW YORK (AP)—Teyana Taylor has some practical advice for her mentor Kanye West.

The singer-dancer, who has performed with the Grammy-winning artist, wants him to take his time recovering.

"Take however much time you need, you know. Time heals all," Taylor told The Associated Press on the red carpet Friday for the "VH1 Divas Holiday: Unsilent Night" show.

"He's a workaholic. He worked his (expletive) off. And if he needs to get his mind right, then I think everybody should respect that and let him do that," Taylor said.

Taylor

Last month, West was hospitalized in Los Angeles after displaying erratic and angry behavior. It forced him to cancel the remaining 21 dates on his tour.

Taylor said she's stayed in touch with West.

"I sure have. That's what family is supposed to do. He definitely knows that his friends and his family's in his corner for sure," Taylor said.

Taylor and West won best dance performance at the Soul Train Awards for "Fade."

The 25-year-old singer-dancer is the newest member of the VH1 Divas club, performing with Mariah Carey, Vanessa Williams, Chaka Kahn, and Patti Labelle.

"Patti and (the others) told me I was a diva in training. So they're teaching me the ropes right now, so that's always a good look"

Knitted breast prostheses are made with tender loving care

DEAR ABBY: You would be doing millions of women a great service by telling them about Knitted Knockers Support Foundation. It has been tirelessly working at inspiring volunteer knitters and crocheters to provide FREE soft, light prostheses for breast cancer survivors.

Typically, the traditional prostheses can be hot, heavy, expensive and take quite a while to arrive. Knitted Knockers are made by people who care. Sometimes your request can be filled that very day. All you need to do is ask. These are sent nationwide and all over the world.

I learned about this wonderful organization earlier this year, and I am now the Northern California distribution point. The response we've had from women who receive them is astounding.

Please let breast cancer survivors know about Knitted Knockers at www.KnittedKnockers.org. There they will find an order form to fill out, and we will be happy to mail out one or a pair. They give women confidence and comfort at a time when they can really use it.

If you know a knitter or crocheter, encourage them to join the cause. Knit and crochet patterns and a list of acceptable yarns are on the website. Abby, thanks for passing the word on!

CLAIRE G. IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR CLAIRE: I know many women will be glad to know about the service you are offering, and grateful for the knitters and crocheters who devote their time so generously to make recovery easier for breast cancer survivors. Thank you for writing.

DEAR ABBY: I'm a retired widow and former model. I have dated mostly men my own age and a little older. I was in a sexless (but affectionate) marriage for nearly 30 years, and I have looked forward to a robust sex life with a new love. But I'm finding that men who are intellectually matched to me are no longer interested in making love. If they are interested, they don't seem to want a monogamous relationship. Any hints?

STARVED FOR AFFECTION

DEAR STARVED: Just this. Widen your dating profile to include younger men, and if you're lucky, you may find someone who is not only your intellectual match but also can perform.

DEAR ABBY: It's Santa here, asking if I could address your readers about a couple of things my helpers at the malls are bringing to my attention.

First and foremost: When you stand in line with your child, and it's finally their turn and they start to cry, scream and tremble, please DON'T force them to sit on Santa's lap. If you do, you are traumatizing your child. Is a picture really worth your child's well-being?

Next, I would discourage new moms from rushing from the hospital with their newborn, 2- or 3-day-old babies. You need to remember how many children sit on Santa's lap. Babies' immune systems are fragile, and Santa's suit can be loaded with germs. Thanks for your time, Abby, and Merry Christmas to all.

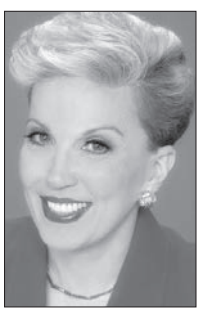
SHOPPING MALL SANTA

DEAR S.M. SANTA: Thank you for your sensible suggestions. Some parents' heads become so full of sugarplums at Christmas that they forget their little ones are too young to associate Santa with the goodies he brings with him. I hope readers will take your message to heart.

For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

HELLO SUSIE, THIS IS CALVIN. I LOST OUR HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT. CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT WE WERE SUPPOSED TO READ FOR TOMORROW?
ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE NOT CALLING FOR SOME OTHER REASON?
WHY ELSE WOULD I CALL YOU?
MAYBE YOU MISSED THE MELODIOUS SOUND OF MY VOICE.
WHAT ARE YOU, CRAZY?? ALL I WANT IS THE STUPID ASSIGNMENT!
FIRST SAY YOU MISSED THE MELODIOUS SOUND OF MY VOICE.
THIS IS BLACKMAIL!
12-6
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WATTERSON

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Item is now in your shopping cart. Proceed to checkout?
CLICK
New customer? Create account and password
I NEED A PASSWORD TO BUY A CHEESE LOG?!
YOU CAN USE MINE
JIM DAVIS 12-6
www.facebook.com/garfield
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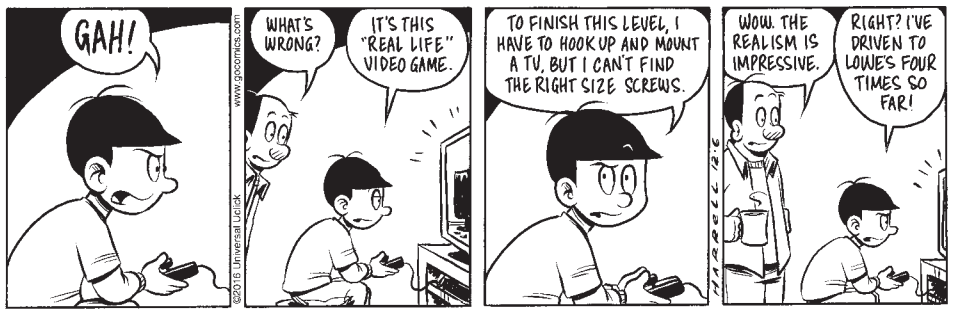
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


GAH!
WHAT'S WRONG?
IT'S THIS "REAL LIFE" VIDEO GAME.
TO FINISH THIS LEVEL, I HAVE TO HOOK UP AND MOUNT A TV, BUT I CAN'T FIND THE RIGHT SIZE SCREWS.
WOW. THE REALISM IS IMPRESSIVE.
RIGHT? I'VE DRIVEN TO LOWES FOUR TIMES SO FAR!
www.gocomics.com
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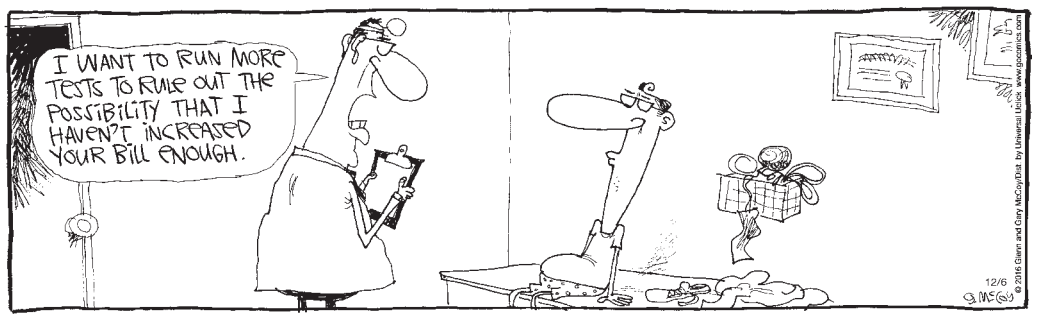
The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


I WANT TO RUN MORE TESTS TO RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT I HAVEN'T INCREASED YOUR BILL ENOUGH.
12/6
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CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

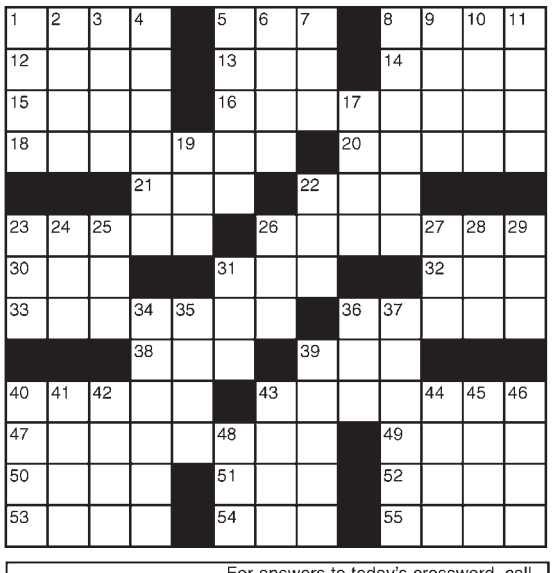
ACROSS
1 Snare
5 Play part
8 Resist, as authority
12 Vagrant
13 Fib
14 French 101 verb
15 Exploits
16 Social butterfly
18 Italian astronomer
20 Mushrooms, e.g.
21 "Fresh Air" airer
22 Longing
23 Criticizes wittily
26 Rubberneckers
30 Year in Cancún
31 Opening
32 Old Oldsmobile
33 Struggling for air
36 In any way
38 Kreskin's claim
39 Cattle call
40 Maxim
43 Palookas
47 Contraptions
49 Party cheese
50 Buffalo's lake
51 Cry
52 On the briny
53 Email command
54 Shock partner
55 Campus digs

DOWN
1 Hoodlum
2 Activist Parks
3 First victim
4 Sitting for a portrait
5 Rags-to-riches author
6 "Arrive-derci!"
7 Danson of "Cheers"
8 Expose as a myth
9 Harrow rival
10 1960s dance
11 Bigfoot's cousin
17 Not many
19 Vinyl records
22 Chatter
23 Abrupt turn
24 — bind
25 Refusals
26 Joke
27 Notable time
28 Seminary subj.
29 Scale member
31 Econ. statistic
34 Categorized
35 "Got it"
36 MSN rival
37 "What a shame"
39 Perhaps
40 Mellows
41 Challenge
42 Tennis score
43 Get bigger
44 Guesser's words
45 Level
46 Fashion line?
48 Airport screening org.

Solution time: 23 mins.

A	G	O	G	■	R	E	F	■	S	A	I	D
F	E	T	A	■	E	E	L	■	P	U	C	E
A	R	I	Z	■	H	E	A	T	H	R	O	W
R	E	C	E	D	E	■	G	R	E	E	N	S
■	■	■	B	O	A	T	■	I	R	V	■	■
T	O	M	O	R	R	O	W	■	E	O	N	S
U	S	O	■	A	S	T	A	R	■	I	C	E
B	U	N	S	■	E	A	T	S	C	R	O	W
■	■	■	U	T	E	■	L	E	T	O	■	■
T	O	M	A	T	O	■	R	U	S	T	I	C
I	N	E	S	C	R	O	W	■	M	E	S	H
N	O	N	E	■	A	V	A	■	O	S	L	O
A	R	T	S	■	L	A	Y	■	S	T	E	P

Yesterday's answer 12-6



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Lindsay Price, 40; Judd Apatow, 49; Tom Hulce, 63; JoBeth Williams, 68.

Happy Birthday: Take your time and do things right the first time. Don't be influenced by emotional manipulation or bullies who try to pressure you into following a path that doesn't suit you. Show discipline and a tenacity to stick to your plans and do what's best for you. Enact change on your terms and you will reach your goals. Your numbers are 4, 18, 23, 28, 33, 41, 47.

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Speak the truth and keep your emotions tucked away. Don't share your beliefs or personal information with those looking for a way to make you feel bad. Stay focused in your thoughts and moderate in your actions. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Identify the individuals and organizations that you believe you can assist. Don't give up when you have so much to offer. Speak your mind and help those less fortunate than you. Romance is encouraged. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Be careful who you trust or what you believe. If someone is pressuring you to take on more responsibility, keep an open mind but make sure you don't overlook your own personal projects. ✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Reach out and share your story. Speaking with emotion and examining what you've learned from past experience will help others as well as give your reputation a boost. Proper health care and good nutrition is encouraged. ✪✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Step up your strategy a notch and show everyone what you are capable of doing. Commit to your plan and strive to reach your goals. Success is based on what you do, not what you say you will do. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Problems at home or within important partnerships can be expected if you give in to pressure or demands made by others. Use your intelligence and make your position perfectly clear. Keep the peace using diplomacy, but stick to your guns. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Consider the big picture, but refrain from signing up for more than you can handle. Physical activity will help you get in shape and give you the energy and enthusiasm to follow your dreams. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Interact, engage in meetings and discuss plans to improve your surroundings. Refuse to let the actions of others deter you from doing what's best for you. Romance is highlighted. ✪✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Look at your options and consider any consequences before you make a move. Don't be fooled by what others say or do. Gather facts and take action based on your own findings. Ulterior motives and emotional manipulation will be apparent. ✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Draw on your emotions and use your insight and intuition to help figure out what your next move should be. Let past experience guide you now and you won't waste time on people or situations that aren't worth your while. ✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Take action, make things happen and secure your position. A firm and established plan will help you reach your goal. Integrate whatever change is necessary and you will have no regrets. Push hard and excel. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Emotions will develop due to unexpected situations. Expect to be put on the spot by someone looking for a handout. Use your intelligence along with diplomacy to make suggestions that will discourage others from leaning on you. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are creative, imaginative and unique. You are goal-oriented and driven.

*Eugenia's website—**eugenialast.com**, Eugenia's android app @ **http://bit.ly/exhoro** and join Eugenia on **twitter/facebook/linkedin**.*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	6			8				
2			4			7		8
	4	3			1			9
	3	9		5				
		2				4		
				4		5	1	
5			2			9	6	
6		8			4			2
				7			4	

Difficulty Level ★★ 12/06

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

5	4	3	1	6	8	7	9	2
8	2	1	5	9	7	3	4	6
9	7	6	4	2	3	1	5	8
7	5	2	9	3	4	8	6	1
6	8	4	7	5	1	2	3	9
3	1	9	6	8	2	4	7	5
2	9	7	3	1	6	5	8	4
4	6	8	2	7	5	9	1	3
1	3	5	8	4	9	6	2	7

Difficulty Level ★ 12/05

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

SPEED BUMPS **Solution: 6 letters**

L	W	R	U	O	H	R	E	P	S	E	L	I	M	C
A	A	A	E	L	C	A	T	S	B	O	S	E	I	O
D	R	I	S	T	C	I	F	F	A	R	T	M	N	N
I	N	S	T	P	E	D	A	R	G	A	A	O	T	C
O	I	E	A	N	H	M	M	A	L	N	I	T	E	R
S	N	D	B	O	E	A	O	F	Y	S	C	O	R	E
U	G	R	L	I	N	D	L	D	E	R	Ⓡ	R	S	T
N	S	E	E	H	J	E	I	T	E	E	Ⓐ	I	E	E
I	I	F	O	S	O	V	C	S	D	E	Ⓜ	S	C	S
S	Z	L	A	U	L	I	T	U	E	E	Ⓟ	T	T	R
T	E	E	E	C	T	C	C	C	U	R	B	S	I	E
S	S	C	R	S	V	E	H	I	C	L	E	S	O	V
L	A	T	A	D	P	O	L	I	C	E	M	A	N	A
O	B	L	I	M	I	T	Y	Y	A	W	D	A	O	R
W	P	M	U	H	P	A	R	K	I	N	G	L	O	T

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Area, Asphalt, Base, Concrete, Crest, Curb, Cushion, Data, Device, Dynamic, Grade, Hump, Intersection, Jolt, Limit, Manholes, Metal, Miles per Hour, Motorists, Noise, Obstacle, Parking Lot, Plastic, Policeman, Raised, Ramp, Reduce, Reflect, Residential, Roadway, Sinusoidal, Sizes, Slow, Speedometer, Table, Traffic, Traverse, Vehicles, Warning

Yesterday's Answer: Wrigley Field

Purchase **WONDERWORD MILLENNIUM SERIES #1 or #2** in time for the holidays! Order online at WonderWordBooks.com or call 1-800-642-6480.

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DUMPTRUCK DRIVER
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Apply in person at Conwood Products, Inc.
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Job Vacancy Announcement

(1) Painter
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If interested, send resume to:
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www.guam.wish.org

"I want to be a firefighter!"
BJ Belacora, 6 yrs.

Saipan Tribune

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
RE-ANNOUNCEMENT ITB17-HSEM-020

SUBMISSION DATE: DECEMBER 20, 2016 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"OFFICE MAINTENANCE/JANITORIAL SERVICES FOR THE CNMI HSEMA EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER, ADMINISTRATION, OPERATIONS AND TRAINING OFFICES"

COPIES OF THE SCOPE OF WORK MAY BE PICKED-UP AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

A **MANDATORY** PRE-BID CONFERENCE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR **DECEMBER 07, 2016 AT 10:00 A.M., LOCAL TIME.**

THE PROVISION OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE COMMONWEALTH RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL BIDS AND PROPOSALS; IN WHOLE OR IN PART, AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTION IN A BID IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS. ALL BIDS SHALL BECOME THE PROPERTY OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ GERALD J. DELEON GUERRERO
SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR HSEMA

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR OF P&S

Job Announcement for Position of Passenger Service Staff

Eastar Jet Co., Ltd. at Saipan International Airport (SPN) will have opening for **one (1) Passenger Service Staff** beginning December 15, 2016. The position requires a College Degree of any major, with or without experience, can speak Korean and English languages. The applicant will be responsible for the recruitment of U.S. citizen workers. The closing date for applications is December 9, 2016. Interested applicants must send their resume to: sn23479@gmail.com. Please contact me should you require any clarifications.

Eastar Jet Co.,Ltd
SENA LEE, Regional Manager, SAIPAN,
USA Tel: 1 670 785 3869 / Mob: 1 670 785 3869

Hanson Micronesia Cement, Inc. – Saipan

Plant Manager
Responsible for daily oversight of our 4000 metric ton cement terminal located on the island of Saipan.

Responsibilities:
- Supervise daily operations of a cement distribution terminal
- Communicate effectively with our customers
- Safely operate equipment to discharge cement from vessels and load customer trucks
- Do periodic maintenance/trouble shoot all terminal equipment
- Prepare all paperwork to accompany loads and keep daily and monthly inventory records
- Ensure all employees are trained and follow safe work practices and procedures; consistent with company policies and OSHA standards

Requirements:
- Minimum of 2 – 4 years' experience in cement or related industry preferred
- Excellent communication skills (oral and written)
- Good mechanical and electrical abilities
- Good organizational skills
- Prepared to work flexible hours, including some weekends, nights, and holidays
- Clerical skills a plus
- College degree preferred (or equivalent by experience)

Please submit resume by email to derek.sadler@hanson.biz.

ROTA RESORT
COUNTRY CLUB

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Chef:
Must have 5 years related experience in Hotel or Resort. College graduate. Good leadership and creative skills, reliable, team player and flexible in working hours.
Pay rate: $30,000.00 per year

Front Office Manager:
Must have 5 years experience in Hotel or Resort. College graduate. Good Leadership, Organizational, Computer and Communication Skills. Must be flexible in working hours.
Pay rate: $24,000.00 per year

Job located at Rota Islands. If interested, please submit resume to humanresources@holidayresortguam.com.
eeo/aap

L&T GROUP OF COMPANIES, LTD.

Vice President
Bachelor degree in any major/field (may be foreign equivalent); 4 years extensive experience as Vice President, President or General Manager. Plans, directs & coordinates operational activities of company engaged in managing of properties/companies in Saipan, CNMI. Determines & formulates policies & provides overall direction of companies within guidelines.

Management Accountant
Bachelor degree in Accounting (may be foreign equivalent); 5 years extensive experience as accountant or accounting manager. Reviews & analyzes monthly financial statements, other financial reports & operating performance & all affiliated strategic business units of company engaged in managing properties/companies in Saipan, CNMI. Reports monthly financial & operating results & annual budget.

Accountant
Bachelor degree in Accounting (may be foreign equivalent); 5 years extensive experience as accountant. Prepare, examines & analyzes accounting records, financial statements or other financial reports to assess accuracy, completeness & conformance to reporting & procedural standards of company engaged in managing properties/companies in Saipan, CNMI. Computes & prepared tax returns.

Business Development Manager
Bachelor degree in Accounting (may be foreign equivalent); five years extensive experience in management level accounting field. Evaluates financial aspects of business development such as budgets & expenditures of company engaged in managing properties/companies in Saipan, CNMI. Formulates strategic & long-term business plans.

Administrative Manager
Bachelor degree in Commerce or Business Administration (may be foreign equivalent); 5 years extensive experience in management level occupation. Plans, manages & coordinates all administrative services of company engaged in managing properties/companies in Saipan, CNMI. Prepares & reviews reports ensure accuracy & efficiency.

Send resume to L&T Group of Companies, Ltd. via mail at P.O. Box 501280, Saipan MP 96950 or hand deliver at 2nd Floor, JP Center Building, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan MP 96950.

ST. JUDE RENAL CARE FACILITY INC.
JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

DIETITIAN
- Must hold a baccalaureate or advance degree in food and nutrition or dietetics.
- Has at least one year experience in clinical nutrition.
- Good interpersonal/communication skills.
- Must comply with the law and regulations of the state dietary or nutritional licensing body.

Interested applicants must submit resume or pick up an application at St. Jude Renal Care Facility Inc., at Chalan Kiya, Saipan. Deadline to submit resume/application will be December 16, 2016 at 4:00 p.m. For more information, please call (670) 234-2901 extension 128.

WHATZIT Solution: A shinning example

CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

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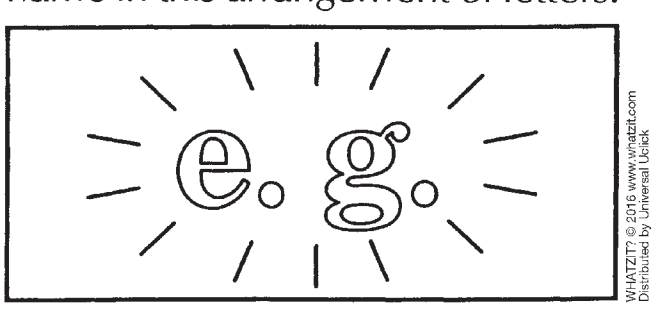

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Brady breaks QB wins record, Patriots beat Rams

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. (AP) — Tom Brady now stands alone when it comes to career wins by an NFL quarterback.

Brady became the league's leader in victories among QBs, earning his 201st by throwing for 269 yards and a touchdown to lead the New England Patriots past the struggling Los Angeles Rams 26-10 on Sunday.

Brady, who was 33 of 46, had tied Peyton Manning last week in a win over the New York Jets.

"It's always been about winning, and I've been very fortunate to be on a lot of great teams," Brady said of reaching the milestone. "I'm just really grateful."

His lone touchdown pass came on a 14-yard pass to Chris Hogan in the first quarter. LeGarrette Blount scored the game's first touchdown , rumbling for a 43-yard, ankle-breaking score in the first quarter while spinning around safety Maurice Alexander in the process. He finished with 88 yards on 18 carries.

The Patriots (10-2) have won seven of their last eight as they prepare for a tough stretch against three teams with winning records over their final four regular-season games.

On the same day that Los Angeles coach Jeff Fisher and general manager Les Snead were given contract extensions, the recently relocated Rams (4-8) proved they still have a long way to go after losing for the seventh time in eight outings.

The Rams entered the game ranked 31st in total offense, averaging just 295 yards per game. Those struggles continued Sunday. They managed just 25 yards in the first half, the fewest by a team in a game this season.

Los Angeles was outgained 402-162 for the game.

In his third career start, rookie Jared Goff was picked off twice, completing 14 of 32 passes for 161 yards.

AP

New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady gives a thumbs-up to Los Angeles Rams quarterback Jared Goff after speaking at midfield follwoing an NFL football game, Sunday, Dec. 4, 2016, in Foxborough, Mass.

Raiders 38, Bills 24

In Oakland, California, Derek Carr threw for 260 yards and two touchdowns to rally the Oakland Raiders to their biggest comeback in 16 years with a 38-24 victory over the Buffalo Bills on Sunday.

After falling behind 24-9 following touchdowns on the first two drives of the second half for Buffalo (6-6), the Raiders (10-2) took the game over with 29 straight points and won their sixth straight to remain one game ahead of Kansas City in the tough AFC West.

Oakland scored touchdowns on three straight drives, including scoring strikes from Carr to Michael Crabtree and Amari Cooper for his sixth fourth-quarter comeback of the season. This was the biggest comeback for the Raiders since overcoming a 21-point deficit to Indianapolis to win 38-31 on Sept. 10, 2000.

Seahawks 40, Panthers 7

In Seattle, Thomas Rawls ran for 103 yards and two touchdowns in the first half, Tyler Lockett took a reverse 75 yards for a score to open the second half and Seattle routed Carolina.

Another prime-time game in Seattle was clouded with odd story lines right from the outset when Carolina quarterback Cam Newton was benched for the first play, only to watch backup Derek Anderson throw an interception.

The Seahawks (8-3-1) rolled up a season-high 534 yards and kept a three-game lead over Arizona in the division with four remaining.

Chiefs 29, Falcons 28

In Atlanta, Eric Berry returned an interception for a touchdown, and then brought back another pick for a 2-point conversion that gave Kansas City an improbable victory over Atlanta.

The Falcons (7-5), rallying from a 27-16 deficit, went ahead 28-27 on Matt Ryan's 5-yard touchdown pass to Aldrick Robinson with 4:32 remaining.

Atlanta decided to go for 2, looking to stretch the margin to a field goal. But Berry stepped in front of Ryan's pass and ran 99 yards the other way to give the Chiefs (9-3) their winning margin. It came after Denver won a game in similar fashion last month, returning a blocked PAT for the winning points at New Orleans.

Carsdinals 31, Redskins 23

In Glendale, Ariz., Carson Palmer threw for 300 yards and three touchdowns and David Johnson scored twice.

The loss by the Redskins (6-5-1) clinched a playoff spot for the 11-1 Dallas Cowboys.

Palmer's 25-yard touchdown pass to Johnson with 11:09 to play put Arizona ahead 24-20, the fourth lead change of the second half.

After a Washington field goal, Palmer's 42-yard pass to J.J. Nelson with 1:56 padded gave the Cardinals (5-6-1) a 31-23 lead.

Steelers 24, Giants 14

In Pittsburgh, Ben Roethlisberger passed for 289 yards and two touchdowns, Le'Veon Bell rolled up 182 yards of total offense, and Pittsburgh's resurgent defense harassed Eli Manning into a flurry of mistakes.

Antonio Brown edged good buddy Odell Beckham Jr. in their personal showdown, catching six passes for 54 yards and an acrobatic scoring grab at the back of the end zone. Tight end Ladarius Green added six receptions for 110 yards, both career highs, and a touchdown as the Steelers (7-5) won their third straight to keep pace with Baltimore atop the AFC North.

Buccaneers 28, Chargers 21

In San Diego, Jameis Winston threw a go-ahead, 12-yard touchdown pass to Cameron Brate midway through the fourth quarter and Keith Tandy intercepted Philip Rivers in the end zone with 2:56 left to give the Buccaneers their fourth straight victory.

Rivers had the Chargers on the move in the final minutes before Tandy got in front of a pass to Dontrelle Inman and picked it off. Tandy's momentum carried him into the end zone, giving the Bucs the ball on their 20. They ran out the clock.

The Bucs (7-5) pulled into a tie with Atlanta atop the NFC South.

Packers 21, Texans 13

In Green Bay, Wis., Aaron Rodgers threw for 209 yards and two touchdowns, and the Packers pulled away with two fourth-quarter touchdowns.

The Packers (6-6) weathered snowy conditions at Lambeau Field, making just enough plays on the cold turf.

Brock Osweiler connected with DeAndre Hopkins for a 44-yard touchdown pass with 1:51 left to get within eight for Houston. Nick Novak missed the extra point, with footing slippery at Lambeau.

Lions 28, Saints 13

In New Orleans, Matthew Stafford passed for 341 yards and two touchdowns.

Golden Tate exploited a coverage breakdown on third-and-long for a 66-yard touchdown early in the fourth quarter when Detroit (8-4) was clinging to a six-point lead. The Lions, who've won seven of eight, dominated statistically, but four opportunities inside the New Orleans 20 ended with Matt Prater field goals, allowing the Saints (5-7) to stay close until the fourth quarter.

This time, however, the Lions pulled away for their most comfortable victory of the season after seven previous victory margins of one to seven points.

Ravens 38, Dolphins 6

In Baltimore, Joe Flacco threw for 381 yards and four touchdowns, and the Ravens overwhelmed the Dolphins in the first half to end Miami's six-game winning streak.

Baltimore (7-5) led 24-0 at halftime behind Flacco and a dominant performance from the league's second-ranked defense. Flacco went 27 for 34 for 258 yards and three scores over the first 30 minutes, and the Ravens yielded only 115 yards and intercepted a Ryan Tannehill pass.

That was enough to provide the Ravens with their fourth win in five games. Miami also is 7-5.

Broncos 20, Jaguars 10

In Jacksonville, Fla., Bradley Roby returned an interception 51 yards for a touchdown, helping the Broncos gain ground in the AFC playoff picture.

Roby picked off Blake Bortles' wobbler across the middle in the third quarter and went untouched the other way. Star linebacker Von Miller hit Bortles as he released the ball.

It was the 11th pick-6 of Bortles' three-year career and his third in the last four games. Houston and Detroit also returned interceptions for touchdowns in games the Jaguars lost by less than seven points.

The latest one resulted in a seventh consecutive loss for Jacksonville (2-10) and secured another miserable milestone for the small-market franchise. The Jaguars became the fifth team in NFL history to post double-digit losses in six consecutive seasons, joining Tampa Bay (1983-94), Detroit (2001-06), Oakland (2003-09) and Cleveland (2008-13).

Jacksonville had a chance to tie in the final minutes, but Bortles fumbled trying to make a play in the pocket.

The Broncos (8-4) rebounded from an overtime loss against Kansas City, and with Miami's loss at Baltimore, moved into position to get one of the conference's wild-card spots.

Bengals 32, Eagles 14

In Cincinnati, Andy Dalton threw a pair of touchdown passes and Cincinnati finally got its depleted offense moving without receiver A.J. Green.

The Bengals (4-7-1) got their first win since Oct. 23, beating a team that's in a swoon of its own. The Eagles (5-7) opened the season with three straight wins, but have dropped seven of nine.

Dalton had completions of 50, 44, 29, 23 and 21 yards. The Bengals scored on each of their first six possessions for a 29-0 lead, reinventing themselves with Green and running back Giovani Bernard sidelined by injuries. The previous time they scored on their first six possessions was 2009 against the Bears.

The only bad moment: Mike Nugent missed another PAT kick wide to the right, his fourth miss in a span of five tries. Nugent made field goals from 32, 33, 26 and 38 yards, the last one deflecting off the left upright.

Bears 26, 49ers 6

In Chicago, Jordan Howard ran for 117 yards and a career-high three touchdowns and the Bears handed San Francisco its 11th straight loss.

The 49ers (1-11) extended their franchise-record losing streak and set a club low with 6 yards net passing on a day when Colin Kaepernick got lifted for Blaine Gabbert.

The Bears (3-9) finished with a season high in points and picked up a rare win in a matchup between two of the NFL's worst teams.

Matt Barkley, making his second start with Jay Cutler sidelined by a season-ending shoulder injury, went nearly the entire first half without a completion. But he led a touchdown drive near the end of the second quarter and finished 11 of 18 for 192 yards.

Westbrook's 5th straight triple-double lifts Thunder

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)—A few weeks ago, Michael Jordan helped induct Russell Westbrook into the Oklahoma Hall of Fame and called himself a fan of the Thunder guard's game.

Now, Westbrook has accomplished something no one has since Jordan—he became the first player with five consecutive triple-doubles since Jordan had seven straight in 1989. Westbrook had 28 points, 17 rebounds and 12 assists on Sunday night, and the Oklahoma City Thunder beat the New Orleans Pelicans 101-92.

The Thunder have won all five games during Westbrook's triple-double stretch, and 26 of 28 the past two years when he gets one. Westbrook said he doesn't worry about the numbers.

"I just play, honestly," he said. "I don't want to get in a conversation of if I'm going to do it every night. I just go out and compete at a high level every night, like I've been doing since I've been in the NBA."

Westbrook is still averaging a triple-double for the season with averages of 31.0 points, 10.8 rebounds and 11.3 assists through 21 games. It was his 10th triple-double of the season and the 47th of his career.

He's more concerned with the fact that the Thunder have recovered from a rough stretch and improved to 13-8.

"I just like to win, brother," he said. "Honestly, that's the most important part. Making sure my guys are good, and making sure everybody's happy with their games, and making sure we win the game."

Enes Kanter had 17 points and 10 rebounds and Victor Oladipo added 15 points for the Thunder.

Anthony Davis, the NBA's leading scorer, had 37 points and 15 rebounds for the Pelicans.

Buddy Hield, who led nearby Oklahoma to the Final Four last season, scored 16 points in his first game back in the state. The last time he had played in Oklahoma, he scored 36 points to help the Sooners beat VCU and advance to the Sweet 16. In this game, he made 6 of 12 shots and 4 of 7 3-pointers.

"I haven't felt like that in a long time," Hield said. "It's so great to get back in there and get a rhythm and see the ball go through the net. I've been struggling the last couple games, but I feel more confident."

Oklahoma City led 49-41 at halftime. Westbrook had 12 points, nine rebounds and six assists at the break, and Davis kept the Pelicans in it with 24 points and 10 rebounds.

Westbrook threw down a vicious right-handed jam on a drive down the middle in the third quarter that gave Oklahoma City a 57-47 lead. He clinched the triple-double on an assist to Kanter for a dunk with 2:14 left in the third quarter. The Thunder took a 78-66 lead into the fourth quarter.

Hield drained a 3-pointer to cut Oklahoma City's lead to four with just under two minutes to go, but Westbrook's 3 with 51.3 seconds to go bumped the Thunder's lead back to 99-92.

"We were still right there, and given the opportunity, Russell's going to make a big play," Pelicans coach Alvin Gentry said. "The big 3-pointer that he made was probably the difference in the game,"

AP

Oklahoma City Thunder guard Russell Westbrook (0) dunks ahead of New Orleans Pelicans forward Terrence Jones (9) during the second half of an NBA basketball game in Oklahoma City, Sunday, Dec. 4, 2016. Oklahoma City won 101-92.

Pacers 111, Clippers 102

In Los Angeles, Thaddeus Young scored 17 points and Indiana rallied from 15 points down to beat Los Angeles, sweeping the season series for the first time since 2013-14 with just its second road win of the season.

Paul George scored 16 points in his return after missing four of the last five games with a sore left ankle and back. Rodney Stuckey also had 16 points and Jeff Teague added 15 points.

Blake Griffin had 24 points and 16 rebounds for the Clippers, whose two-game winning streak was snapped in their return to Staples Center. They went 3-3 on their recent six-game road trip, including a 91-70 loss at Indiana last week.

Knicks 106, Kings 98

In New York, Derrick Rose and Carmelo Anthony each scored 20 points, and New York held off Sacramento for its eighth win in 11 games.

The Knicks took a 21-point lead in the first half, gave up 18 consecutive points in the third quarter and then outplayed the Kings down the stretch to win their third straight overall and improve to 9-3 at home.

Brandon Jennings added 19 points for New York, and Kristaps Porzingis finished with 15 points and 14 rebounds.

DeMarcus Cousins had 36 points and 12 rebounds for the Kings, but shot just 9 for 30.

Magic 98, Pistons 92

In Auburn Hills, Mich., Serge Ibaka scored 21 points and blocked four shots to help Orlando beat Detroit.

Nikola Vucevic added 16 points and eight rebounds for the Magic.

Pistons guard Reggie Jackson made his season debut after missing Detroit's first 21 games with knee tendinitis. He had 18 points in 23 minutes. Marcus Morris led the Pistons with 21 points.

Orlando won for the third time in four games while Detroit had its three-game winning streak snapped.

Selig, Schuerholz elected to Baseball Hall of Fame

OXON HILL, Md. (AP)—Bud Selig oversaw baseball during a time of transformation and turmoil—wild cards and a ballpark boom, the cancellation of a World Series and the Steroids Era. For much of his reign, though, there was one constant: those first-place Atlanta Braves, built by John Schuerholz.

The former commissioner and the longtime general manager met up again Sunday, both elected by an overwhelming margin to the Hall of Fame.

Even so, Selig didn't see it as a sure thing.

"It reminded me of many a ninth inning when I used to pace around," the one-time owner of the Milwaukee Brewers said on a conference call.

Schuerholz was picked by all 16 voters on a veterans committee at the winter meetings in suburban Washington. Selig was listed 15 times.

"The ultimate of honors," Schuerholz said.

It took 12 votes for election, and former player and manager Lou Piniella was third with seven. Harold Baines, Albert Belle, Will Clark, Orel Hershiser, Davey Johnson, Mark McGwire and George Steinbrenner also were on the ballot considered by the Today's Game Era panel, and none of them got more than five votes.

Selig became the fifth of 10 commissioners to reach the Hall. He will be enshrined July 30 in Cooperstown, New York—on his 83rd birthday.

His election was sure to draw fire from fans who link him to some of the game's darkest moments.

He called off the 1994 World Series during a players' strike. He was in charge when illegal steroids left a cloud of performance-enhancing drugs that still lingers—and that might prompt some to wonder whether power hitters and power pitchers who benefited from PEDs should now be welcomed to the Hall, too.

AP

In this Sept. 26, 2014, file photo, Major League Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig speaks before a baseball game between the Milwaukee Brewers and the Chicago Cubs in Milwaukee.

"Sometimes in life you have to go through certain things to maybe solve the problem," Selig said.

Under Selig, the playoffs expanded from four teams to eight to 10 and the leagues were split into three divisions. Video replay was added to review umpire calls, revenue sharing was put in place and 20 new stadiums opened across the majors.

"We were a sport resistant to change," he said. "And, yes, I believe in those years as commissioner, that's the most change in baseball history."

There was no variance, however, once Schuerholz took over as GM of the Braves in the winter of 1990.

Atlanta had never won even a single playoff game in its 25-season existence before going from worst-to-first in its first year under Schuerholz, starting an unprecedented run of 14 straight division titles.

The Braves were boosted in that time by their Big Three of Greg Maddux, Tom Glavine and John Smoltz, and manager Bobby Cox, all of them already in the Hall. Star third baseman Chipper Jones is expected to join them soon enough.

Schuerholz was the first GM to run clubs that took World Series crowns in both leagues, winning with Kansas City in 1985 and Atlanta in 1995.

"I loved to build teams," he said.

In 26 years as a GM, his teams won 16 division titles and six pennants.

"I always had aspirations to be a successful general manager," Schuerholz said.

The 76-year-old later became president of the Braves and is currently a vice chairman with the team, helping prepare for its move to SunTrust Park next season. His son was a minor league infielder with the Braves and works in their front office.

Born in Baltimore, and the son of a former Philadelphia Athletics minor league second baseman, Schuerholz played the same position at Towson University in his hometown. He was teaching eighth-grade English and world geography in 1966 when, during a class break, he wrote a letter to the president of the Orioles, saying he really wanted to work in baseball and hoping for a chance.

"It all started with that letter," he remembered.

Birdies and blunders, but a healthy week for Tiger Woods

NASSAU, Bahamas (AP)—The return of Tiger Woods was more about the big picture than any of his big numbers.

And that started with the sight of that red shirt on Sunday.

Woods grumbled about three more double bogeys in the final round of the Hero World Challenge. Considering how badly he has felt in the 15 months since he last played, he still was able to keep it in perspective.

"It feels good to be back out here playing again, competing and trying to beat the best players in the world," Woods said. "I missed it. I love it."

He even loved some of his golf at Albany.

Woods made 24 birdies, the most of anyone this week. He also had six double bogeys, three of them in the final round. The last one on the final hole, his third of the week on the 18th, gave him a 4-over 76. It was the highest score of the tournament, and he finished 15th in the 17-man field.

The other players were not about to measure him by his score—not yet, anyway.

"The whole world is watching a couple of rounds of golf," said British Open champion Henrik Stenson, who finished second to Hideki Matsuyama. "It's great to see him back and healthy and playing. I want to see him up in contention and try to beat him when it matters the most.

"Give him three or four tournaments, maybe six tournaments, maybe around the Masters," he said. "It's easy to overanalyze a very limited amount of golf."

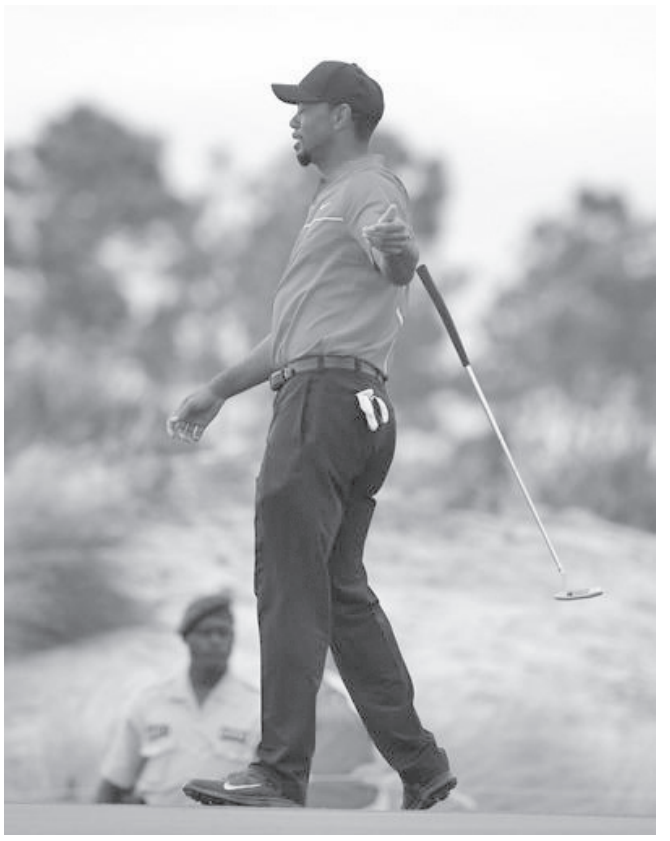
Rarely has a December event attracted this much curiosity. Woods, the dominant player of his generation, had gone 466 days since his previous tournament because of two back surgeries. The recovery at times made it difficult for him to walk and led him to wonder if he would ever play.

"Getting back to this point is beyond anything that I've ever experienced in my lifetime," said Woods, who turns 41 at the end of the month. "The pain issues that I had, it was rough. Quite frankly, there some pretty dire times where I just couldn't move."

Woods showed no stress in his swing or in walking five straight rounds, starting with the pro-am. He had plenty of length, at times going after his driver with a little more pop to clear a bunker. He holed a few long putts . He missed a few short ones. At times, he looked like he had never been away for that long. And at times it did.

"It's kind of new to me again, the feel of playing, the feel of adrenaline in my system, hitting shots," Woods said.

One day after he briefly pulled within two shots of the lead, it was clear early on this day would be a struggle.



AP

Tiger Woods drops his club after missing a putt on the third hole during the final round at the Hero World Challenge golf tournament, Sunday, Dec. 4, 2016, in Nassau, Bahamas.

Woods was scrambling for pars instead of being in a position to attack pins. He twice made double bogey on a par 5, starting at No. 6 when he blasted out of the sandy area to the back side of a double green, forcing him to chip off the putting surface. Still, he rallied with three straight birdies to play the front nine in even par.

He was never going to win the tournament—Matsuyama was too far ahead—but it was a chance to post a decent number and take more positives into what figures to be a two-month offseason. Instead, Woods added two more double bogeys and shot 40 on the back nine.

He made his third double bogey of the week on the 18th hole without even going into the water. His tee shot landed in a thick palmetto bush, and he had to take a penalty drop to take it out. Just his luck, his drop in the sandy waste area settled right in front of the nub of another bush. He got that back to the fairway, went just over the green and took two putts from there for his 6. "What he did here showed that he's certainly up for the task and his game is there. He's ready to go," Jordan Spieth said. "Even with Tiger, every time we set expectations, he exceeds them."

Woods at least starts his climb from No. 898 in the world, the product of not playing since Aug. 23, 2015.

He said he wants to play a full schedule in 2017—that typically means no more than about 20 a year—and will look at his options over the next few weeks.

"I need to play more tournaments. Zero in 15 months is not a lot, so this is one," Woods said. "I thought I made some good, positive things happen this week. Made a lot of birdies, also made a lot of mistakes. That's something I know I can clean up."

MIEKO

From Page 28

problems. The 37-year-old Carey was not feeling well the past two weeks and she has yet fully recovered from the punishing race in the 2016 XTERRA World Championships held in Maui late in October.

"I was not sure if I will be ready for the race. I really wanted to come to Saipan, which is my second home. I wanted to win and see my friends, who are always at the finish line cheering for me. I did everything to make my body ready, I did massage, blood test, and physical therapy. Fortunately, a miracle came on race day and I got my fifth title. I am very happy to win in front of my Saipan friends and I am thankful for their support," the veteran triathlete said.

"I would also like to thank the NMI Cycling Federation for hosting a great event and to all the volunteers," added Mieko, who finished No. 9 overall and was never threatened by her competitors.

Meanwhile, American Rachel Martin, Chinese-Taipei's Wen Chun Hsu, and Saipan's Tomomi Sato won their respective divisions in the road bike category.

Sato made it to the finish line at the 5:22:39 mark to top the 40 to 44 age group and beat Guam's Tara Tydingco, who timed in at 5:32:05.

In the 30 to 39 age group, Martin lorded it over against six other participants. She clocked in at 4:36:14 and was the only biker in her division to complete the course under five hours. Runner-up Ayana Braxton and third placer Shawna Brennfleck submitted 5:06:24 and 5:08:14, respectively. Claire Devey (5:13:27), Shannon Foley (5:33:28), Kathy Ruszala (6:14:15), and Chinese-Taipei's Yin Han Su (6:16:51) rounded out the finishers in the division, while the latter's compatriot Hsu was the lone entry in the 20 to 29 division and registered 6:17:00.

MASGA

From Page 28

Ray Duenas will also compete in the preliminary MMA events as he takes on Kier Agda at 170-175 lbs, while Joseph Camacho will square off against K.J. Villagomez at 135 lbs. Completing the tentative fight card are Nick Cruz vs Joey Boy Crisostomo Jr. at 145 lbs; Juan Lizama vs Andrew Sablan at 135 lbs; and Vince Campo vs Enrique Torres at 220 lbs.

Larry "The Pain" Naputi is also in the fight card, but his opponent in the 150-lb catch weight will be announced later.

REPEAT

From Page 28

Meanwhile, the pairs of Daniel Kang and Annie Lai, Sally Lee and George Lai, and Ken Imaya and Chie Sato completed the mixed doubles champions circle in the annual tournament.

Imaya and Sato posted the toughest finals victory in the mixed doubles competition as they labored for a 4-6, 6-4, 10-8 against 2014 champion Marivic and Donn Dunlop in the over 40 category. Imaya, who gained the same division crown last year with Lydia Tan, and Sato were seeded second in the five-team contest and advanced to the title game after knocking out Sally Lee and Eric Van Der Maas, 6-3, 6-1.

The Dunlops, who were also the runners-up last year, earned a return trip to the finals after outlasting Mizuyo Otobe and Don Castillo, 6-4, 0-6, 10-4. Otobe and Castillo set up a semis duel against Marivic and Donn Dunlop after winning over Sam Lai and Merle Hudkings, 6-2, 6-3.

In the mixed doubles 3.0 division, Lai and Kang ruled the field after downing Grace Choi and Anthony Gregoire in the finals, 6-1, 6-4. The newly crowned champions moved into the title match following their 6-1, 7-5 semis win over Karen and Edwin Simbulan, while Choi and Gregoire took the other finals ticket after eliminating Mi Hye Park and Jun Wang, 6-0, 6-0.

George Lai and Sally Lee notched the mixed doubles over 50 crown after defeating Annie and David Lai in the finals, 6-2, 6-3. It took George and Sally also two sets to oust Karen Ramsey and Landon Nadler in the semis, 6-2, 6-4, while Annie and David duplicated the feat with their 6-3, 6-4 win over Kyoko and Tashio Matsumura.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Toronto	14	6	.700	—
Boston	12	8	.600	2
New York	11	9	.550	3
Brooklyn	5	14	.263	8½
Philadelphia	4	16	.200	10

Southeast Division

Charlotte	11	9	.550	—
Atlanta	10	11	.476	1½
Orlando	9	12	.429	2½
Miami	7	13	.350	4
Washington	6	12	.333	4

Central Division

Cleveland	13	5	.722	—
Chicago	11	8	.579	2½
Milwaukee	10	8	.556	3
Detroit	11	11	.500	4
Indiana	10	10	.500	4

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

San Antonio	16	4	.800	—
Houston	13	7	.650	3
Memphis	13	8	.619	3½
New Orleans	7	14	.333	9½
Dallas	4	15	.211	11½

Northwest Division

Oklahoma City	13	8	.619	—
Utah	12	9	.571	1
Portland	11	10	.524	2
Denver	7	13	.350	5½
Minnesota	6	14	.300	6½

Pacific Division

Golden State	17	3	.850	—
L.A. Clippers	16	6	.727	2
L.A. Lakers	10	12	.455	8
Sacramento	7	13	.350	10
Phoenix	6	14	.300	11

NBA LEADERS

Scoring

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Davis, NOR	19	211	165	599	31.5
Westbrook, OKC	20	207	173	623	31.2
Cousins, SAC	19	187	139	545	28.7
Harden, HOU	20	168	172	566	28.3
DeRozan, TOR	20	200	148	558	27.9
Lillard, POR	21	187	157	583	27.8
Durant, GOL	20	191	122	546	27.3
Curry, GOL	20	177	100	538	26.9
Thomas, BOS	20	161	161	526	26.3
Butler, CHI	19	148	167	487	25.6
Irving, CLE	18	166	63	440	24.4
Leonard, SAN	20	158	131	486	24.3
Walker, CHA	20	167	84	476	23.8
James, CLE	17	146	78	396	23.3
Hayward, UTA	15	111	96	342	22.8
Wiggins, MIN	20	157	111	456	22.8
Anthony, NYK	19	156	78	429	22.6
Towns, MIN	20	172	77	451	22.6
Antetokounmpo, MIL	18	150	93	403	22.4
Wall, WAS	16	129	78	356	22.2

FG Percentage

	FG	FGA	PCT
Gobert, UTA	77	120	.642
Capela, HOU	111	176	.631
Jordan, LAC	90	144	.625
Howard, ATL	109	181	.602
Gortat, WAS	90	155	.581
Kanter, OKC	104	183	.568

	G	OFF	DEF	TOT	AVG
Whiteside, MIA	20	88	210	298	14.9
Drummond, DET	20	71	194	265	13.2
Jordan, LAC	21	68	200	268	12.8
Howard, ATL	20	88	167	255	12.8
Gortat, WAS	18	59	159	218	12.1
Vucevic, ORL	20	56	175	231	11.6
Gobert, UTA	21	65	167	232	11.0
Davis, NOR	19	35	173	208	10.9
Bogut, DAL	15	39	120	159	10.6
Westbrook, OKC	20	47	162	209	10.4

Assists

	G	AST	AVG
Harden, HOU	20	235	11.8
Westbrook, OKC	20	225	11.2
Wall, WAS	16	154	9.6
James, CLE	17	158	9.3
Paul, LAC	21	190	9.0
Frazier, NOR	20	151	7.6
Green, GOL	19	140	7.4
Lowry, TOR	20	147	7.4
Rondo, CHI	17	123	7.2
Rodriguez, PHL	19	132	6.9

NFL STANDINGS

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New England	10	2	0	.833	319	207
Miami	7	5	0	.583	255	278
Buffalo	6	6	0	.500	305	274
N.Y. Jets	3	8	0	.273	196	266

South

Houston	6	6	0	.500	207	257
Tennessee	6	6	0	.500	308	296
Indianapolis	5	6	0	.455	270	301
Jacksonville	2	10	0	.167	224	313

North

Baltimore	7	5	0	.583	256	207
Pittsburgh	7	5	0	.583	290	236
Cincinnati	4	7	1	.375	245	259
Cleveland	0	12	0	.000	197	352

West

Oakland	10	2	0	.833	345	299
Kansas City	9	3	0	.750	281	242
Denver	8	4	0	.667	286	229
San Diego	5	7	0	.417	334	319

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-Dallas	11	1	0	.917	333	228
N.Y. Giants	8	4	0	.667	245	237
Washington	6	5	1	.542	303	295
Philadelphia	5	7	0	.417	268	245

South

Atlanta	7	5	0	.583	386	331
Tampa Bay	7	5	0	.583	277	285
New Orleans	5	7	0	.417	347	335
Carolina	4	8	0	.333	283	321

North

Detroit	8	4	0	.667	275	251
Green Bay	6	6	0	.500	295	302
Minnesota	6	6	0	.500	233	209
Chicago	3	9	0	.250	204	270

West

Seattle	8	3	1	.708	264	194
Arizona	5	6	1	.458	276	251
Los Angeles	4	8	0	.333	180	262
San Francisco	1	11	0	.083	234	370

x-clinched playoff spot

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

10th Annual Hell of Marianas Century Cycle Race

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO

The lead pack passes along Beach Road during last Saturday's 10th Annual Hell of Marianas Century Cycle Race.

Guam's Mieko Carey has company in the Philippines' Nestor Gonzales on their way along Beach Road.

Saipan's Jerome Diyco takes a sip from his water bottle as he joins a small group of bikers cruising along Beach Road.

A biker massages his thigh after completing a climb in the San Roque area.

KSPN's Bob Coldeen takes video footages of Mark John Galedo's finish.

Two female bikers head out of Marpi.

A young biker slows down as he negotiates an uphill road in the San Roque area.

Brad Ruszala passes along Mariana Resort.

Brady breaks QB wins record, Patriots beat Rams
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Westbrook's 5th straight triple-double lifts Thunder
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Mieko extends reign in 'Hell'

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Former Saipan resident Mieko Carey crossed the finish line smiling as usual, showing no signs of fatigue as she ruled the women's pro division of the Hell of Marianas Century Cycle Race for the fifth time and third in a row.

Carey's time of 3:33:28 in the 100-kilometer course bested the 3:49:14 of Guam's Manami Iijima and 3:56:30 of Japan's Chika Fukumoto. With her victory in last Saturday's race, the Guam-based triathlete remains the winningest participant in the annual event, which she topped in 2008, 2010, 2014, and 2015. Mieko surpassed the record (3) of Australia's Jodie Willett last year. The Land Down Under biker won the women's pro division from 2011 to 2013, while her compatriot Amber Halliday prevailed in 2009, and Guam's Susan Seay took the inaugural crown in 2007.

A few weeks ago, clinching her fifth division championship was a bit far fetched for Carey as she was not even sure she would make it to this year's event due to health

See MIEKO on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Mieko Carey is all smiles as she nears completion of last Saturday's 10th Annual Hell of Marianas Century Cycle Race.

Repeat for Race, Heras

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Long-time CNMI coach Jeff Race and junior player Isabel Heras topped the mixed open singles event in the 8th Annual TanHoldings Tennis Classic after earning an unbeaten record in the weekend competition.

Race and Heras secured the division championship after sweeping Carol Lee and Steven Goodwin, 6-2, 6-4, in last Sunday's game at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan courts. Heras and Race, who also ruled the same event last year, earlier eased past Wendi Herring and Martin Jambor last Saturday, 6-0, 6-1, for their first victory in the round-robin contest. Lee and Goodwin settled for the runner-up honors as they also prevailed against Jambor and Herring last Saturday, 6-0, 3-0 (retired).

In the mixed 4.0 doubles, No. 1 seed duo of Tania Tan and Clayton Izuka lived up to expectations after besting five other pairs. Izuka and Tan clinched the division championship following their 6-3, 7-5 triumph over the unranked Gillian Villagomez and Vincent Tudela in the finals, 6-3, 7-5.

Villagomez had a good debut in the annual tournament as she and Tudela pulled off an upset against the second-ranked Conatsu Kaga and Rintaro Miyawaki in the semifinals, 6-3, 6-4. Villagomez and Tudela marched into the semis of the lower half of the draw after slipping past Coume Kaga and Richard Steele, 5-7, 6-4, 10-6.

At the upper half of the bracket, Izuka and Tan bagged a Final Four berth after outclassing Malika Miyawaki and Alex Park, 6-4, 7-6. Park and Miyawaki, before their semis loss to the eventual champions, won over Ami Tsukagoshi and A.J. Hudkins, 6-1, 6-0.

See REPEAT on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Jeff Race makes a forehand return during his and Isabel Heras' mixed open doubles game against Carol Lee and Steven Goodwin in the 8th Annual TanHoldings Tennis Classic last Sunday at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan.

Masga vs Rangamar in lone kickboxing match

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Vince "The Clinch" Masga and Derrick "El Peligro" Rangamar will return to the octagon cage as they open the action in this Friday's Trench Warz 20: Full Trottle.

Masga will be on the eight sides for the first time this year against Rangamar, who is making a comeback after taking part in Trench Warz 17: Night of the Champions last Dec. 13, 2013.

Rangamar is hoping to gain his winning form after losing his last four fights. He bowed to Korean Kwan Ho Kwan (TKO punches) in their MMA bout in Trench Warz 17. The Marianas Elite standout also dropped his two matches in 2012. Incidentally, his first defeat four years ago was against Masga, who earned a unanimous decision win in their bantamweight clash in Rites of Passage 12: Unstoppable. Rangamar's other loss in 2012 was against Kyle Aguon, who used an arm-triangle choke on the former to prevail via submission in their duel in PXC 32.

Rangamar's string of losses started in 2011 when he fell (unanimous decision) to Shane "Pikaboo" Alvarez in Rites of Passage 11: Onra, while the former's last victory was against Chris Layug in Rites of Passage 10: Bad Intentions last March 11, 2011. Rangamar won via TKO in the first round.

Meanwhile, 12 MMA bouts will be featured in Trench Warz 20.

The lightweight title match between Spike 22's Rob "The Real Deal" Wusstig and Trench Tech's Stanley "The Raging Bull" Iakopo will highlight the roster of MMA fights in this weekend's event.

Other matchups will have Jesse Mesa battling Andres Camacho at 125 lbs; Jadrian Camacho facing Franklin Santos at 120lbs; Bradlee Manalo dueling Atrion Norita at 130 lbs; Justin Quichocho challenging Jay "Tabi" Muna also at 130 lbs; and Jeffery Garcia debuting against Torsten Rosser at the 155-lb catch weight.

See MASGA on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Vince "The Clinch" Masga, right, is seen here during his title bout against Guam's Josh "The Hedgedog" Alvarez during the Rites of Passage 14: Mayhem in April 2013 at the Royal Taga Hall of Saipan World Resort.